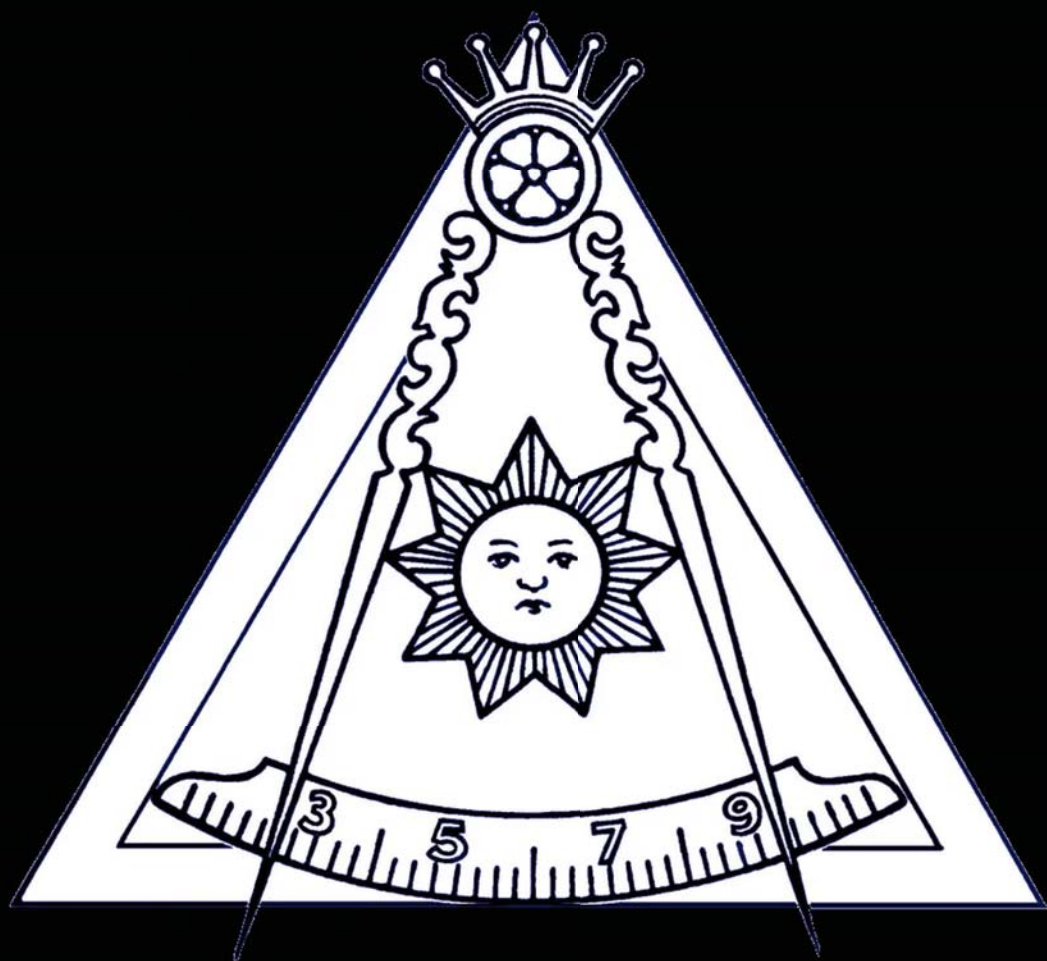


THE SYMBOLISM OF FREEMASONRY



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BOOKS



FREEMASONIC SYMBOLISM *.

Freemasonry is an initiatory and esoteric institution that reveals its teaching through certain codes based primarily on building symbolism. This is because Freemasonry today is to a large extent the heir of the ancient guilds of builders, and although today we Masons no longer construct buildings, this symbolism is nevertheless still in force, among other reasons because it is consubstantial to the Masonic Order and constitutes its signs of identity and its very *raison d'être*, as we shall see below.

First and foremost, Masonic symbols refer to a set of ideas directly related to the knowledge of Cosmogony, and therefore of man, for man is a cosmos in small, a microcosm, to put it in Hermetic language. The ancient builders considered the Cosmos to be their symbolic model par excellence, and in constructing their buildings they imitated the structures of that model, revealed above all through geometric forms, among which the circle and the square, the respective symbols of heaven and earth, stand out. These symbolic forms and structures always respond to universal archetypes, to principles that are coeval with any time or historical or personal circumstance.

It does not matter, as we said, that we Masons of today do not erect buildings. What is really important is that we can know these same principles or ideas through the symbols that decorate our temples, the most important of which is precisely the one that refers to the One who is truly the Author from whose Thought arises the Great Work of Creation, known in Freemasonry as the Great Architect of the Universe, and in other traditions, such as Hinduism, as the "Spirit of Universal Construction". The Great Architect of the Universe is the Supreme Principle, the true keystone or cornerstone of the Masonic Temple. It is under the influence of that Principle that we Masons carry out our work within the Lodge, work in which, alongside the study of symbols, is the practice of the rite, whereby the Lodge itself becomes a meaningful space analogous to the very structure of the Cosmos. As we shall see later, the symbolism of the Lodge is also one of the subjects of meditation to which our Order attaches great importance.

And while we are on the subject of the Great Architect, we think it is appropriate to point out that in Freemasonry the Great Architect has no religious connotation whatsoever. And it cannot, because Freemasonry is not a religion, like Catholicism or any other religion, but an initiatory organisation which provides man with the means and the knowledge necessary for his perfection as a human being. Let us not forget that Freemasonry is a Science and an Art, and its Supreme Principle manifests itself as the Intelligence which organises the Cosmos, the Universal Temple, according to the ideal plan conceived in its Wisdom, which, as it is said in the Book of Sacred Law, "made all things in number, weight and measure". This has nothing to do with a religious god to be "worshipped", as if it were something outside of man. As R. Guénon says in this regard in an article entitled "Masonic Orthodoxy", from volume II of *Studies on Freemasonry and the Fellowship*: "The symbol of the Great Architect of the Universe is not the expression of a dogma, and if it is understood as it should be, it can be accepted by all Masons, without distinction of philosophical opinions, because it does not imply on their part the recognition of the existence of any God". It is not, therefore, the ascription to a "dogma" that is asked of anyone entering the Masonic temple for the first time, since

No teaching can be derived from the symbols present there. It is not a question of "believing" in the symbol, but of understanding it, for to the extent that we understand it and penetrate its deeper meaning, we will be one with the idea that shapes it. The Mason takes the symbol as a vehicle of Knowledge and not as an object of "worship", for he knows that the symbol is not to be confused with what it symbolises.

But the fact that Freemasonry is not a religion does not prevent the existence of Masons who in their private lives, and in the exercise of their freedom, practise a particular religious creed, or none at all. This should not matter to Freemasonry, for these beliefs, be they religious or of any other kind (philosophical, scientific, political, etc.) are to be left, along with the metals, at the door of the Temple. As Guénon himself says in another article entitled "Gnosis and Freemasonry", Freemasonry "must be pure and simple Freemasonry. Each of its members, on entering the Temple, must divest himself of his profane personality and make abstraction of all that is foreign to the fundamental principles of Freemasonry, principles around which all should unite to work in common in the Great Work of universal construction".

In a manner of speaking, the only thing that Freemasonry "demands" of its members is a firm will in the "grinding" and "polishing" of the rough stone, which, as some rituals say, "is a coarse product of Nature, which the Craft of Freemasonry must polish and transform". This grinding and polishing is precisely the symbol of the Mason's work with himself, which he carries out with the first tools that the Order offers him after receiving the spiritual influence in the rite of initiation: the mallet and the chisel, respective symbols of will and right intention. The work of regeneration cannot be carried out without a firm and persevering will that desires it, that is to say without an inner force that influences and transmits its creative power to the "formless matter" of the disordered and chaotic psyche, symbolised by the rough stone. But this inner force needs to be directed and guided by intelligence, or rather by "intellectual rigour", which "distinguishes" that which in being is in accordance with the essential reality of its nature (what that being is in itself), from that which is nothing but its superfluous and illusory additions. Thus, with the chisel of the intelligence, driven by the mallet of the will, the apprentice files and corrects the edges and roughnesses of his rough stone, separating the "thick from the thin", the "chaos" from the "order", the "profane" from the "sacred", an alchemical operation that must become a daily rite. This separation constitutes the fundamental premise to be fulfilled in the first stages of the initiatory process, until, with patience and perseverance, it reaches that perfection of which we spoke earlier, exemplified in the cubic and carved stone.

Initiation, or the way into Knowledge, awakens in man his innate qualities, which remain "dormant" or "withdrawn" in their ordinary state, thus assimilated to "sleep" and potential. The influence of initiation adds nothing that man does not already possess and is not part of his own essence. In this sense, we fully agree with Arturo Reghini when he says that this perfecting "is linked to the knowledge and recognition human nature and its inherent possibilities. It is necessary to realise the ancient precept of the Delphic oracle: know . It is necessary to search within oneself for the mystery of being, to consider human life, its functions, its limits and the possibility of surpassing them, of actively intervening in its course, of not abandoning it to drift, of discovering and awakening the latent germs, the senses and the still unknown, dormant and hidden powers.

It is necessary, finally, to carry out a work of spiritual edification, a transmutation, to attain virtue and knowledge so that the miserable worm

that crawls on the earth to be transformed into a glorious butterfly flying freely towards righteousness". To achieve that end Reghini himself tells us that there is no other means than "Masonic work based and sustained by symbolic initiation, that is to say conferred and obtained through the intelligence of the familiar Masonic symbols, in the image of the work of art which is done with the instruments of the craft".²

The expression "Know " should also appear on the frontispiece of Masonic temples. In truth, there is nothing more important for man than to know his true identity, to know who is behind that mask which we call "personality", and which Freemasonry identifies with the metals of the old man, "plunged, as the rituals say, in the deepest darkness".

As we are seeing, the idea of transmutation has much to do with the alchemical process, and in fact the Masonic "Royal Craft", developed through the three degrees of apprentice, companion and master, is identical with the "Great Work" of Alchemy, so that a fully coherent transposition can be made between alchemical symbolism and constructive and architectural symbolism. The rough stone of Freemasonry is, in this sense, the same as the "raw material" Alchemy: in both are contained in a potential or virtual way all the possibilities that lead man towards his regeneration, possibilities which, in the case of the apprentice Mason, will begin to develop and grow thanks to the spiritual or intellectual influence (for both concepts express the same thing) transmitted through the symbols and rites of the Order.

Symbol and rite

Let us now consider some of those symbols which, together with the rites, constitute the living heritage and the true treasure of the Masonic Tradition. For the sake of clarity, we can classify them as follows: into geometric and visual symbols; into sound and vocal symbols; and finally into symbols in movement, which are none other than the rites.

On the importance of geometric and visual symbols in Freemasonry, suffice it to recall that in the past, Freemasonry was identified with Geometry itself, which is perfectly logical since the latter finds its natural application in architecture. Indeed, the word geometry derives from Gea (earth) and metron (measure), i.e. "measure of the earth", which of course has much to do with the builder's trade in that he delimits a space in order to carry out his work.

On the other hand, geometrical symbolism is, like numerical symbolism, one of most important inheritances that Freemasonry has received from the Pythagorean tradition. It should be remembered that the medieval guilds of builders came directly from the craft colleges of ancient Rome, and that these had received much of their knowledge of geometry directly from the Pythagoreans. An unbroken filiation would then exist between the Masonic and Pythagorean Orders, to the extent that many Freemasons have seen in Freemasonry an adaptation of Pythagoreanism to modern times. The fact is that in Masonic legends Pythagoras appears, together with the god Hermes, as one of the mythical founders of the Order. Indeed, in these legends, both Pythagoras and Hermes are the ones who found the two columns (later assimilated to the J. and B. columns of the Masonic temple) where all the knowledge dating back to the very origins of humanity was engraved, and among which were the arts and sciences of Cosmogony. As Federico Gonzalez says in this respect in the article "Hermetic Tradition and Freemasonry",

As the same No. 13-14 of SYMBOLOS states, these two columns "form the two great sapiential tributaries which will nourish the Order: Hermeticism, which will ensure the protection of the god through Philosophy, that is to say, through Knowledge, and Pythagoreanism, which will provide the necessary arithmetical and geometrical elements required for constructive symbolism; both currents are directly or indirectly of Egyptian origin. Equally that these two columns are the legs of the Mother Lodge, by which the Neophyte is brought forth, that is to say by the wisdom of Hermes, the great initiator, and by Pythagoras, the Gnostic instructor". We could then say that Freemasonry is the natural confluence of these two constituent currents of the Unanimous Tradition, and that in it they are but one, shaping its identity and its being.

Returning to geometric symbolism, we must consider the tools or tools themselves. Specifically, we are talking about the level, the plumb line, the square and the compass. All of them are directly related to the fundamental geometric shapes. For example, the plumb line is clearly a symbol of the vertical, and the level of the horizontal. In construction symbolism, both are inseparable and mutually necessary, since the verticality of the building, i.e. its perpendicularity, is given by its perfect levelling. And in turn, this levelling is the result of a balance achieved thanks to the constant presence of a vertical axis, which marks the "right middle" that prevents any unevenness. The plumb line and the level thus represent the two axes of coordinates that make the harmonious raising of the whole construction possible.

The same happens with the square, which is formed by joining a vertical and a horizontal. With this tool we also construct the figure of the square, and likewise the cross if we join two squares by their respective vertices. Both figures are inseparable from the idea of the quaternary; thus: the four elements, the four cardinal points, the four seasons, the four cyclical periods of humanity, the four phases of the moon, the four periods of human life, etc., in other words, everything related to the earth and the terrestrial. In reality, the square is a right angle, and it is intended to "square" the stone during its polishing process, after it has been worked by the mallet and the chisel. Finally, let us remember that the Latin word for square is "rule", thus indicating the idea of order, or of "framing" which makes order possible, especially that of thought, which becomes one with the Intelligence it reflects, which is symbolised by the compass.

As for the latter, its relationship with the circle and with all figures that tend to circularity is obvious. But circular forms are always generated from a previous centre, which is precisely the one indicated by one of the two arms of the compass, the one that remains immobile while the other revolves around it. The centre of the circumference would thus be a symbolic image of the Principle, and the circumference itself, in turn, an image of the multiplicity of manifestation, arising from or generated by the irradiation of that Principle, which nevertheless remains immutable while everything revolves, changes and mutates around it. This is why the compass is one of the symbols directly associated with the creative activity of the Great Architect, as is attested by numerous engravings in which he is represented with a compass in his hand, tracing the plan of his work, that is to say, of the cosmos.

Two other important geometrical figures are the Luminous Delta (triangular in shape) and the Five-pointed Star or Flaming Star, respective symbols of the Great Architect and of the fully regenerated man who has returned to the centre of himself. It is a fact that both the Delta and the Flaming Star are of Pythagorean origin, for they are intimately connected with each other.

related to the Tetraktys (which is also triangular in shape), and to the Pentalfa or Pentagrammatic Star respectively, the latter being the distinctive sign of the Pythagorean brotherhood.

Among the second group of symbols, the sound and vocal symbols, we find the "sacred words" and the "words of passage", as well as the legends related in the different degrees. This is all part of the oral teaching of Freemasonry, which is perfectly complemented by the visual teaching of geometrical symbolism. The "sacred words" are so called because they represent different names of the Great Architect. Each Masonic degree is signed and has its own sacred word. The meaning of that word gives meaning and guidance to the ritual and symbolic workings that take place in each of those degrees. That is why it is so important for the Mason to know this meaning, for it will be a constant and permanent point of reference that will guide him throughout his initiatory process.

No less important are the "words of passage", so called because they allow one to "pass" from one degree to another, which directly relates them to the symbolism of passage or transit, common to all initiatory traditions. The expression "to be in possession of the word of passage" means that the Mason has completed a stage in his process of Knowledge, that he has progressed in the "ways that have been traced out for him" since ancient times by his tradition, and that he is therefore inwardly prepared to receive the "increase of his salary".

And finally there are the symbols in movement, which, as we said, are none other than the rites. The rite puts into practice the idea that the symbol expresses. It represents the development and experience of that idea, that is to say, of making it effective through its permanent reiteration. There is no point in understanding what the symbol expresses if this understanding is not then lived as a truly transforming reality. That is why the rite is so important Freemasonry, for without this constant vivification of the symbols, the work done in the lodge would lack all "force and vigour", and would become mere allegories, if not purely mechanical acts. In this sense, meditation, concentration and work on the symbols also constitute a form of the rite, since the ultimate aim of the rite is to generate a state suitable for the understanding of the higher realities conveyed by the symbols. It could be said, then, that the rite, performed under these conditions, is a "meditation in action", and this can be done both within the lodge and in the world, which is the universal lodge.

We could then say that Freemasonry is itself a rite, hence it is also called "the Order", as a synonym for the cosmic order itself. For this very reason, in the Masonic Lodge (the symbolic image of that order) everything is carried out according to the rite, and all the ritual gestures and signs performed within it are to be considered as what they are: vehicles for the transmission of the symbolic teaching and its regenerating influence. Truly there is no greater rite than the search for Knowledge, for in it man finds the very foundation of his existence. This quest is a "conscious act", and everything that is then realised, experienced and lived during its development becomes meaningful, to have a meaning that "orients" us in the labyrinth of this perishable world and drives us towards the encounter of our true being and origin.

The Lodge, image of the world

We shall now speak of the symbolism of the Lodge, and the first thing that strikes our attention is the very word Lodge, practically identical with Logos, which

means precisely the Word or the Word with which the Great Architect creates the world or cosmos. Similarly, Logia, if not etymologically then at least in its symbolic sense, is identical with the Sanskrit word loka, which means "world", "place", and by extension "cosmos". On the other hand, there is also an identity between Logia, Logos and the Greek lyke, meaning "light". Loggia is also a technical term of Italian origin used in architecture to designate a roofed and open gallery, composed of arcades supported by columns and generally located in the elevated parts of buildings, as is the case, for example, of the "paradises" of theatres.

Here we have, in a nutshell, what distinguishes the Masonic Lodge above all, which as the ancient rituals say "is a very enlightened and very regular place", just as is the cosmos out of the creative Logos or Spirit of Universal Construction.

Light is thus synonymous with the cosmos, while darkness or gloom is assimilated to the "chaos" that precedes the cosmos. The darkness in which the Lodge finds itself before the opening of the work symbolises precisely this pre-cosmic "chaos", and the opening itself would come to represent the gradual "illumination" of this darkness. In reality, the opening of the Lodge is a cosmogonic rite that we Masons constantly perform, and if one studies the symbolism of this rite carefully, one will see clearly that it is a true rite of foundation or creation of a meaningful space and time analogous to the very structure of the cosmos itself. The symbolic description of the Lodge reproduces precisely that structure:

What is the shape of your Lodge?

A rectangle.

In which direction are their long sides oriented?

From East to West.

What about its broad sides?

Noon to Septentrion.

And their height?

From the surface of the earth to the heavens (the zenith).

And its depth?

From the surface to the centre of the earth (the Nadir).

What do these addresses mean?

That Freemasonry is Universal.

We can see that these directions form a three-dimensional cross, whose long, wide, high and low axes of co-ordinates form the internal structure of the Lodge, in the image of the cosmos itself. This rectangle is in reality a double square, oriented horizontally from East to West according to its long sides and from Midday to North according to its broad sides. It is from the centre of the rectangle that the Lodge orients itself vertically towards the highest point of the heavens (the Zenith) and towards the deepest point of the earth (the Nadir), thus acquiring its true universal dimension. It is to this height and depth that the well-known expression refers: "in the Lodge of St. John temples are raised to virtue and dungeons are dug for vice".

This vertical structure is also projected on the base plan of the Lodge, which is divided into three distinct parts, in the image of Solomon's Temple, the prototype of the Masonic temple. Heaven is represented by the semicircular hemicycle to the East, which, like Solomon's Temple, is called Debir. It is ascended by three steps or stairs, which refer to the idea of gradual and hierarchical elevation to other planes or higher levels of reality. The earth is symbolised by the Hikal, which is all the remaining space of the Lodge up to the two columns J. and B., which support the "portico of the entrance", assimilated to what in Solomon's temple was called the ulam. It is said that the "portico of the entrance" is neither inside nor outside the Lodge. It is therefore a place of transit, or passage, which the Mason must pass through coming from the darkness of the profane world, which is properly the nether world.

This same idea of elevation, indicated by the three steps leading to the Debir, is also found in the altar or altare, which comes from the Latin altare, whose root, altus, means high or elevated place. In many traditional cultures, altars (like temples) were erected at the top of mountains, or of step pyramids, as in the case of pre-Columbian civilisations, or of Babylonian ziggurats, to give just two examples. The altar is situated at the very centre of the Lodge, and it is around it that we move and perform our rites. It is therefore the "geometrical point" or "heart" of the Lodge, and through it symbolically passes the plumb line of the Great Architect linking heaven and earth. It is also called the "Altar of Oaths" because on it we make the commitments and "alliances" that we make with the Order and the Spirit that vivifies it. This oath is taken in the presence of the "Three Great Lights" of Freemasonry, the Book of the Sacred Law, the Compass and the Square, which are placed precisely on the altar. In almost all Lodges this Book is none other than the Bible, but it can also be substituted for any of the wisdom books of mankind, which is a further indication of the truly universal character of Freemasonry. What is really important is that in that Book the voice of the Perennial Wisdom, the essence of which is above and beyond the particular forms it may take to manifest itself, is recorded. The same can be said of the compass and the square, tools whose symbolism, as we have already seen, is directly linked to the idea of an ever-living, ever-present Cosmogony.

Turning again to the East, on the back wall we find the luminous Delta with the Tetragram or ineffable name of the Great Architect in the centre. As we have already said, this Delta is a triangle with the vertex upwards, a figure which expresses the reality of the universal principles, and at the same time is the first prototypical structure which expresses itself on all planes of manifestation as a force which creates, another which conserves, and a third which destroys, or rather transforms. These three force-ideas arise from a single Principle, which is symbolised in the Delta by a single eye which sometimes replaces the Tetragram, but which refers to the same sense of presence.

The immutable nature of the deity in the very bosom of manifestation. Moreover, manifestation, from its subtlest to its densest and most material reality, is symbolised by the four letters that make up the Tetragram: Iod, He, Vau, He, each corresponding to the four levels or worlds that constitute universal existence, and which are the same as those found in the Kabalistic Tree of Life. In this name of the Great Architect is thus summed up the work of creation, and its knowledge is directly linked with the search for the "Lost Word".

But the Lodge is not just a static structure - any more than is the The lodge can also be visualised as a wheel, an image of the "wheel of the cosmos" or Rota Mundi. This is expressly indicated by the twelve columns or pillars that frame the Lodge grounds, and which are equivalent to the twelve zodiacal signs. Five of these columns are situated to the North, five more to the South, and the remaining two (the Jakin and Boaz columns) to the West, just inside the entrance portico.

We will say that the zodiac (which means precisely "wheel of life") is like the framework of the visible universe, and its cyclic movement, together with that of the planets and other constellations, influences the alternating change of the seasons and the maintenance and renewal of the life of the cosmos and of man. It follows that Freemasonry is not ignorant of the ancient science astrology, which, together with alchemy, also reveals the mysteries of heaven and earth.

The Jakin and Boaz columns are particularly linked to the symbolism of the two solstices, and thus to the two ascending and descending phases of the annual cycle. They are thus assimilated to the two St Johns, the Baptist and the Evangelist, and to the two faces of the Roman god Janus, and thus to the "gate of men" and the "gate of the gods" respectively. These are the zodiacal gates of Cancer and Capricorn, corresponding to the entrance of summer and winter, i.e. the descent and ascent of sunlight. The solstitial gates play a very important role in the initiatory process, which, it must not be forgotten, exactly reproduces the stages of cosmogonic development.

For the Pythagoreans, through the Cancer gate the souls enter the "den of nymphs", which is the same as the Platonic cavern, another image of the world. There the Mason, crossing the two columns as if he were born by them, begins his horizontal or earthly journey, until he reaches the centre of himself, the altar of his heart, where another door opens, the door of Capricorn, through which he begins another journey, this time vertical and celestial towards the dome and the keystone that crowns the mysteries of cosmogony, thus giving access to the metaphysical and unconditioned states. In other words, man "enters through one door and exits through another, and in the meantime - designated by space and time - has the opportunity to recognise himself and escape from this condition by identification with other states of universal being, which he can experience through individual consciousness - similar to universal consciousness - and which constitute the possibility of particular - and also universal - regeneration, always, of course, taking generation and creation in space and time as a support".³ This same process can also be seen in the mythology of a great number of heroes and solar gods, such as Osiris, Quetzalcoatl, Mithra, Christ and the master Hiram himself.

In the centre of the Lodge is the "mosaic pavement", a tapestry of black and white squares exactly like those on a chess board, whose

The origins are also symbolic and sacred like those of most games. The mosaic pavement is undoubtedly a symbol of the manifestation that is effectively determined by the struggle and delicate balance between the positive, masculine and centrifugal energies (yang, luminous) and the negative, feminine and centripetal energies (yin, dark), also expressed in the alternation of the rhythms and cycles of nature and the cosmos. These same energies are represented by the Sun and the Moon, which in the Lodge are found presiding over the East, on either side of the luminous Delta.

We will recall that the colour white symbolises the celestial energies, and the colour black the terrestrial energies. The former oppose the latter, and vice versa, at the same time as they complement and combine (attracted like the positive and negative poles of a magnet), determining in their perpetual interaction the development and very structure of cosmic and human life. This structure is also generated by the confluence of a vertical -celestial- axis and a horizontal one.

-(exemplified in the pavement by the transversal and longitudinal lines), forming a cruciform weave or weft, a grid, in short, that reflects the tensions and balances to which the order of creation is subjected. Likewise, the vertical can also be equated with time and the horizontal with space (the former active with respect to the latter, which it permanently shapes), that is to say, with the two coordinates that establish the "frame" that allows the existence of our world and all the things included in it. The idea of this order is already implicit in the meaning of the word 'mosaic', which derives from the Greek *museion*, literally "temple of the muses", an expression which is perfectly suited to the Masonic Lodge, where, as we are seeing, each of its parts and the totality of its whole constitute a symbolic synthesis of universal harmony.

In the very middle of the mosaic pavement is the "picture of the Lodge", which is a synthetic outline of the entire Masonic temple, as well as a symbolic support for meditation and concentration. In fact, the Lodge Table, containing within it the design of the most significant and important symbols, thus becomes a vehicle of spiritual influence in Freemasonry.

In the olden days, the lodge's picture was drawn directly on the ground before the work was begun, and was erased when the work was finished. This gives a measure of the importance of the picture in the cosmogonic rites of the builders, for in truth the tracing of the different symbols was in itself a rite destined to "attract" and make present in the significant space of the Lodge the ideas-force contained in those same symbols, and which would later be embodied in the building. Although today it is no longer the custom in Masonic workshops to draw the picture of the Lodge, the influence of these symbols continues to be present, to the point that without the presence of the picture the work cannot be opened. In any case, the drawing of the Lodge Chart is a ritual exercise of meditation and concentration on the symbols, which the Mason could practise whenever he wishes.

And finally, the three pillars of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty are located around the mosaic pavement and the picture of the Lodge. The pillars are also the "Three Little Lights" of Freemasonry, and should not be confused with the "Three Great Lights" already mentioned. In some Lodges the three pillars are consecrated to the goddess Minerva (Wisdom), Hercules (Strength) and Venus (Beauty).

The pillars are lit during the opening of the work and extinguished just before the closing of the work, which leads us to believe that, as in the case of the lodge painting, these pillars play an extremely important role in the development of the Masonic ritual in any of its degrees. In this respect, it should be remembered that the significant name of "stars" by which the three pillars are also known undoubtedly alludes to the celestial character that is evident in their symbolism, for it is clear that they are the guiding "ideas" that are to preside over Masonic work, for as the rituals say, "Wisdom conceives, Strength executes and Beauty adorns".

As mentioned in this regard during the opening ritual, these stars must be "made visible" in order that these works may be "illuminated" and develop in harmony with the plans of the Great Architect. As we said above, the gloom in which the Lodge is plunged before the lighting of the pillars exemplifies the primordial "darkness" that preceded the formation of the cosmic order, from which it follows that the illumination of the Lodge would come to represent a further symbol of the action of the cosmogonic Fiat Lux, or Let there be Light, emanating from the creative Word or Word.

Considered from the microcosmic point of view, these three principles also represent three qualities or states of the human soul, which, when lived within the consciousness, make possible its transmutation and thus contribute to the building of the spiritual temple, of which the material temple is the symbolic figuration. The three pillars are linked respectively with the Worshipful Master, the First Warden and the Second Warden, i.e. with the three principal officers of the Lodge (called the "three lights"), those who are responsible for directing and "ordering" the work that takes place in the Lodge. It is these three officers who light or illuminate the pillars (and also those who extinguish them during the closing), pronouncing at the same time the invocations clearly alluding to the construction of the inner temple and the outer temple.

In the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite these invocations are as follows:

May the Wisdom of the Great Architect preside over the construction of our building!

May the Force sustain you!

May Beauty adorn it!

It is no coincidence then that it is precisely around this picture and the three pillars that the rite of the "chain of union" takes place, in which the creative and illuminating power of the Great Architect is invoked, and implicitly also that of all the brothers and sisters scattered over the face of the Earth, not forgetting the ancestors who have passed to the Eternal East and who contributed with their effort, sacrifice and dedication to Truth and Knowledge to the edification of the Great Universal Work. And this vertical invocation is realised through the chained and fraternal union of all the living forces present in the Lodge, that is to say, of all the components of the Lodge, which thus establish a subtle communication between their respective individualities, serving as a support for the manifestation of the spiritual influence.

As stated in the book *Symbol, Rite, Initiation. The Masonic Cosmogony*, chap. 33, and with this we are done, the chain of union "constitutes a perfect magical circle of concentration of vibrations, a generating dynamo, not only capable of transmitting its force to each of its members, but also of emanating it to other visible and invisible spaces; an active form of invocation and also an incantation of protection for all those who have the grace to participate in the mysteries of the Sacred Art, the so-called guardians of the Temple of Solomonian wisdom, image of all temples, who as part of their functions must know how to close their ranks and work harmoniously, tending towards perfection".

NOTES

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Lecture given in a Lodge in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on December 7, 2000. Francisco Ariza is a contributor to *SYMBOLOS: Art - Culture - Gnosis*, co-director of the Centre for Symbolology Studies in Barcelona and director of the telematic magazine *El Taller*.

1

Article translated in *SYMBOLOS* magazine, No. 13-14, pp. 192-195.

2

Considerations on the Ritual of the Freemason Apprentice. Ed. Arché Milano.

3

Federico González, *The Wheel. A symbolic image of the cosmos*, chapter VII.

The Grand Latin and American Operative Lodge is a Federation of Workshops of Europe and America, linked with the Tradition, where the use of tools is taught to begin the work of polishing the rough Stone and bringing it closer to a proper form in accordance with its Destiny. It is called Operative because of the following fact: we Masons know that our origin, though immemorial, is based immediately on the work of the builders and craftsmen of the Middle Ages, who produced the innumerable Romanesque buildings throughout Europe and later the wonder of the Gothic manifested in hundreds of cathedrals and buildings of those eras. This continued until the middle of the 17th century, when the Order gradually took on a more speculative character and the Guilds began to accept a large number of members who were not craftsmen, who became quantitatively more than craftsmen. In that century and the beginning of the next, Freemasonry became directly related to Alchemy, the Hermetic Tradition and the Rosicrucian movement, thoughts and ideas which meant that those who expressed them were in turn directly or indirectly related to Freemasonry, or that Freemasons claimed to be heirs to them. This transformation eventually made Masons much more speculators than craftsmen, in accordance with the prevailing rationalism of the time. In 1723 the first so-called Anderson's Constitutions were proclaimed; they modified several of the Old Charges and gave an opening, if I may say so, to the religious freedom of Masons and even to the ideological approach of Freemasonry, which at that time was Christian and

more specifically Catholic. This led many Catholics to reject these Constitutions, which were initially accepted only by four Lodges in London, although in fact later, in 1813, the Old Masters who had not accepted them (for example because of the cutting of the Third Degree) were unified with the new ones, thus unifying Masonic work and conserving the ancestral rites, now summarised in the three symbolic Degrees: Apprentice, Fellow and Master, giving rise at that date to the constitution of the United Grand Lodge of England. This is how we end up in the 19th century where Freemasonry is almost exclusively speculative and where the ideas of indefinite progress, secularisation, etc., are held by the great majority of the Masons. However, the transmission of Masonic Initiation has been prolonged to the present day, through these adaptations to the historical world, without losing the essential, in the midst of the vicissitudes of the 20th century, reviving again and again the Ancient Uses and Customs of an immemorial time.

It is to distinguish ourselves from the so-called speculative Lodges that we have adopted the term Operative. This is due, moreover, to the practical reality of the work undertaken by the Workshops of the Grand Latin and American Operative Lodge, and although today our Craft is not directly applied to manual labour, it is so inasmuch as these tools are now intellectual and help us, if not aid us, on the path of Knowledge. They are fundamentally the symbols, and the Symbolic Way - insofar as it forms a series of teachings and learning - as a mediator between the different planes of reality. Likewise the rite, which is so important in Freemasonry, and which is a set of symbolisms in motion.

Our Obedience, constituted in 1992, which has its headquarters in the Valleys of Barcelona, works with the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite as well as the different Lodges which constitute it and which in the beginning were mostly separate from other Obediences and therefore "wild" (i.e. they worked "under the Auspices of the Celestial Vault"). The Grand Latin and American Operative Lodge federates both male and female and mixed Workshops and admits the universal possibility of initiatory Knowledge for men and women of any race or creed without exclusion.

Under the Masonic motto "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" we address all our Brothers, always bearing in mind that any kind of activity must be carried out as is customary within democratic structures, liberal thought and human rights.

PAPER PRESENTED AT THE INTERNATIONAL MASONIC CONVENTION "MEXICO 82" A. L.
G. D. G. A. D. D. U. FEDERICO GONZALEZ - FERNANDO TREJOS

Very Ven. and QQ. HH. all:

We must begin this paper by expressly acknowledging the organisers of this International Masonic Convention "Mexico 82", whose praiseworthy work has made it possible for so many brethren from different corners of the globe to meet together, all as one, asking and answering themselves once again, what is Freemasonry, what is its philosophy and how to focus its action in the modern world. It is a magnificent opportunity given to us by destiny to receive the valuable enlightenment of the Elder Brethren, which we should take advantage of to gather our forces - which are increased by the fact that we meet together - putting them at the service of understanding and employing them energetically in the fulfilment of

the high and noble ideals which our organisation has set for itself since its inception. We are presented with the beautiful occasion to dialogue and meditate on the foundations on which our universal temple is founded; to discern how to join in the Great Work or Royal Art by producing within ourselves the inner transmutation through the patient and uninterrupted polishing of our stone; And to renew the decision to devote ourselves with all vigour to the fulfilment of our duty, courageously assuming the immense responsibility of building and constructing in these difficult times when man seems to be putting most of his resources towards destruction; and to attract light and more light to put it at the service of a humanity that seems to have lost its North and to be sinking into the darkness of materialism, the loss of the spirit and forgetfulness of true principles and values.

We wish to lay special emphasis on the subject of the first three so-called symbolic or St. John's degrees, and to draw attention to the far-reaching importance of the symbolism which constitutes the very foundations of our whole institution.

This does not mean that we consider it as an end in itself. The symbol is the sensible representation of an idea or of a force which is hidden behind it. It is the instrument through which ideas come into manifestation, and at the same time the most appropriate vehicle, which, if we drive properly, will lead us precisely to its understanding and to identity with the energy which lies behind it. It veils its content to those who are not able to see; but it reveals it to those who are willing to see beyond the mere appearances of things and to unravel their meaning. It is therefore only a means and not an end.

Once again we must meditate on the deep meaning of our temples, rites and instruments of work.

We have been taught that all that manifests in heaven and earth are symbols designed by the G.A.D.U. to make us acquainted with its planes and its laws, and to identify us with its harmony. The whole Cosmos is said to be the symbol of an invisible being hidden therein; and our temples, built according to the pattern of the Universe, enable us to know and identify ourselves with it. We are also shown that man is a temple; a small universe containing within it all the possibilities of Being; a microcosm created in the image and likeness of the macrocosm, and like the macrocosm a symbol of that invisible spirit which is in everything and which is nothing other than the essence and supreme identity. There is therefore a clear analogical relationship between Man-Temple-Universe, and that is why by knowing the significance of our lodges and seeking the true interpretation of the Cosmos and its laws, we are practising the supreme art of knowing ourselves in order to reach the centre of our being.

We would now like to make a strong appeal to the brothers to be aware of the need to preserve our symbolism and thus to preserve the purity of our tradition and our rites. If we look at the history of the Order, we will realise that this is what has distinguished it since its foundation and what has allowed its unity through the centuries. We want to insist on the need for us to continue to engage in study and meditation on the meaning of our instruments of work, without which the Work would not be possible. We must put all our efforts into unravelling the profound mystery of our secret signs and words; and do so not out of a vain desire to increase scholarship, nor as a mere means of

satisfy curiosity, nor by settling for theory alone. Our symbolism is not only theoretical and speculative - which we are certainly not disdaining - but fundamentally practical and operative. The symbol acts within the consciousness of those who open themselves to it, producing order and understanding; and we Masons must act, guided by those mysterious signs, which are nothing more nor less than the plans of the Great Architect, which are to guide us constantly throughout the process of our internal construction, serving also as a firm support in all the external actions which we must undertake in placing our science at the service of humanity.

The I Ching says: "The circumstances are difficult. The task is great and full of responsibility. It is nothing less than leading the world out of confusion and back to order. Yet it is a task that promises success, for there is a goal capable of bringing divergent forces together". Could this not be considered a true Masonic meditation? Our duty is to bring back order and we could not fulfil it if we had not first obtained the inner harmony to which the symbols lead. The task before us is to seek a supreme and common goal for the sake of which we will put all our united strength, always putting it before all self-interest. Our task is the unceasing struggle for union and for the peace.

As Q. H. Eugen Lennhoff says in his book *Freemasons in the Face of History* H. Eugen Lennhoff in his book, *Freemasons in the Face of History*: "The work to which Freemasonry is to devote itself is that of inner and outer peace. If Freemasonry wants to create a union, it can be a power, but not a world power with political or ecclesiastical characteristics, but a moral power whose unity is based on the common possession of the same profound symbolism, a moral power which would be able to stand up to boundless selfishness, a centre of forces radiating humanitarian ideas, which are so lacking today, and the will for a supreme morality in political, religious and social struggles".

We would have to be insensitive not to appreciate the beauty of our rituals and symbols. How beautiful and impressive it is each time we prepare to enter the revered temple. To gird ourselves with the apron that reminds us that we are preparing for the work, inner and outer, and that we are ready to "get down to work"; to knock at the door in our usual way, asking for light in the knowledge that we will receive it; to cross the threshold that separates the ordinary world from that other sacred and true world where we breathe another time and experience the existence of a different space where order, unity and love reign in contrast to the chaos and multiplicity of profane life; to experience the strength of that metaphysical, invisible and indestructible Unity, symbolised by our mysterious letter "G", which reminds us of the presence of the G, the one true guide of all our work; to make our march and find ourselves between the two columns, which symbolise the duality of all that is manifested and remind us of our permanent duty to unite the opposites and find the balance between life and death and between construction and destruction. It is there that we remember that "second birth" which was given to us in virtual form and which we must make effective in the course of our career; it is also between the columns that we greet the three lights of our workshop and symbolically express that we are ready to give our lives before betraying our duties. And it is there that we reinforce our Faith in our supreme ideals - not the blind faith of dogmatism, but that open-eyed faith which we come to through understanding and which constantly serves as our driving force; also our Hope in realising them - which is supported by the common effort of the brethren; and our Love of a Supreme Being.

which expands towards nature and its laws, and particularly towards QQ.
The human rights organisations that radiate it to mankind.

When we see the three lights on the altar, they evoke the triunity of essence, substance and form; of spirit, soul and body. The Book, the Square and the Compass are present there. That Sacred Book of the Law, the living symbol of tradition, which teaches us first to spell, then to read and finally write in the Book of Life; the Square which points us to earth and matter, shows us horizontal and vertical straightness and makes us see the limits of our temporal existence; and the Compass which puts us in contact with heaven and spirit, and points us to the possibility of the limitless, of immortality and of the eternal. This symbolism also reminds us of man's intermediary function between heaven and earth and to recognise that "as above, so below". The Ara is the centre of our temple which evokes the centre of Being and the heart of man. It is the "thinking" heart in which the subtle force of pure intellect and the noble feeling of love are housed. Without this idea of the centre, it would not be possible for us to conceive of the concept of Unity, nor to build anything, for all energies would be dispersed in multiplicity.

We must meditate, again and again, on the significance of the quadrangular shape of our lodge; of the four cardinal points of space and their union with the four seasons of cyclic time; of the grids that decorate our floor; and of the four unforgettable journeys we had to undertake blindly: that underground journey we made in search of the cavern where we first saw the light, and those three trials we underwent through the other three elements, air, water and fire.

We could not ignore the immense force contained in our five-pointed flaming star which signifies the realised and perfect man, which contains the quintessence of the Self.

Can you imagine what would become of our Order if the unifying power of symbolism had not existed? Some guild lodges would perhaps have become modern workers' unions; others would have become business organisations, religious sects or political parties; and there would be no shortage of those that would have become mere charitable or social clubs. In other words, our venerable institution would have disappeared as such and become lost in the multiplicity of the profane.

Since one of our principles is freedom of thought, it is logical that we find divergences between the philosophical, religious or political points of view of the different members of our Association; but we are united by the symbols and rites that characterise, teach and nourish us. And, since one of the supreme ideals is that of union, how can we not defend, safeguard and transmit those instruments which unite us?

Yes, QQ. and Ven. HH. the time has come to increase the struggle for unity. In the first place it is necessary that we make a fervent appeal to all true Masons to put aside all divisive self-interests, and to devote ourselves all together to the fulfilment of our sacred duties which we have sworn to perform, at this time of transition, so difficult for this humanity as a whole. And secondly, it is now more urgent than ever that we put the power of intelligence at the service of uniting the peoples and achieving peace. As the statutes of the

Dutch Freemasonry, an idea that has traditionally embraced Masonic thought, the Order "explores the sentiments common to all human beings in order to unite nations, and pursues the object of destroying prejudices, the source of enmity between peoples".

We believe that there is no other institution, at the present time, apart from Freemasonry, which is capable of achieving such high and difficult ideals. We must keep alive the hope that the seed sown by our predecessors, the sprouting of which has been so vigorous, will eventually bear fruit, thus rewarding so much common effort, to which we must join resolutely, without hesitation.

Let us observe how the great initiates of all times and places have written the most important pages of history. Let us see how the most brilliant events of the last centuries have been executed by brethren, also initiated into the ancient mysteries, through the spiritual influence of Masonic thought.

Such is the power of Freemasonry that it has even had an enormous influence on associations that were born to be our enemies and detractors.

Brother Lennhoff, in his aforementioned book, asks: "How is it that in defiance of all persecution, Freemasons are constantly increasing in most countries?" and answers: "The answer is simple: it consists solely in the infinite power of Masonic thought flowing from the spirit of its symbols, which have nothing to do with political questions, but are exclusively spiritual in nature". And he goes on: "This statement may seem strange; but the facts corroborate it. The passionately infamous mystery of Freemasonry is not based on mysterious actions kept secret, nor on a powerful world-wide organisation for profit, but on the Mason serving an abstract idea which, taught through symbols, takes root deep in the consciousness of the thousands of thousands who understand it. It is the vivid understanding of the mystery of fellowship". And our H. praising "the admirable idea which excites select spirits and which could empower Freemasonry, in the present spiritual chaos, to be a potent and decisive element in the redemption of our troubled world".

That immense influence, which each of us has received through initiation, must be directed towards the attainment of the inner order which will be reflected in the world around us. We Freemasons know that it is through the symbolic language

-It is only through the radiant centre of our own Self, the centre most suited to human nature, that we will each find within our own consciousness, the metaphysical Unity which is none other than our identity with the G. A. D. U., and which alone can assure us of our abode in the Eternal East. It is also only through the radiation of that centre, and also through the symbols which represent it, that understanding, peace and union among men can be achieved.

But to return to our theme of Masonic universalism in general, and of tradition and symbolism in particular, we must ask ourselves: What is the origin of our Order? Where do these symbols endowed with such power come from?

We are told that Freemasonry, as a visible organisation, came into being in 1717, and that its founders themselves assigned to it the origins of the human species, tracing it back to

to the Illo tempore, mythical and sacred, which all civilisations remember as a Golden Age or a Paradise in which the principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity were the daily reality, and man, at that time identified with the gods, lived in permanent contact with Truth. It is said that when man lost that state by reason of the "fall", that Truth was hidden within the cave, and was handed down by tradition in the centres of initiation into the mysteries with which our Order has so often been associated. The ancients then performed their rites in order to recover that lost "other time" and to revive the myths for ever.

It is true that there is a lack of historical elements to demonstrate empirically our origins, although some lodges are working with excellent results; but what is really important is to observe in our rites, how these same myths are expressed, vivifying themselves in the solar figure of the Ven Master and in the planetary symbolism of the dignitaries of the Lodge.

It is also true that we can find multiple Masonic signs in the remains of ancient civilisations from a wide variety of historical times and geographical locations. It is the universalism of the symbol that gives universality to the Order.

The legend of Hiram, which as we all know is the key to Masonic symbolism, is identical in its essential elements with the myth of Osiris whom the priests of Egypt worshipped; it has also been compared with the mysteries of Eleusis, which, using the temporal symbolism of the equinoxes and solstices, represented - as does Christianity - the sacred drama of death and resurrection. Some have seen Masonic elements in the symbolism of the building of Noah's Ark; our rites have been compared to the Persian worship of Mithras, in which there was the idea of degrees, an analogous symbolism, rules of brotherly love, equality, discretion and tolerance, and in which the drama of resurrection was also depicted. Other brethren have poetically said that Freemasonry draws from the fountains of eternal wisdom expressed by the great masters of all time. Hermes Trismegistus - who is the Egyptian Thoth or Roman Mercury - gives his name to many of the lodges; and indeed the so-called Hermetic books, which are attributed to that tradition, have repeatedly been regarded as Masonic books. From the School of Pythagoras we inherit the knowledge of the qualitative sense of numbers and their symbolic relations to geometry - which we use for building plans - to music and to astronomy. We have been related to her, to other Pythagoreans such as Socrates and Plato, as well as to the later Neoplatonic schools, especially those of the Renaissance, which also used the system of the three degrees. There have been those who have seen the antecedents of Freemasonry in the Jewish school of the Essenes, from whom we would have derived the symbolism of the Qabalistic words we use; and respected brethren have compared the stages of our work of "polishing the rough stone" with the alchemical symbolisms of the phases of inner transmutation.

We can in any case safely assert that the high aims and aspirations which unite us are essentially the same as those which brought men together, from ancient times, in secret communities of a cultural, initiatory and constructive character; and that the builders of the Temple of Jerusalem, as well as the Collegia Fabrorum of the Romans, possessed secrets of construction which passed subsequently to the guilds of stonemasons and builders. Few historians can doubt that these guilds are our most direct antecedents. And there are many who note the immense influence that they exercised on

our Order, the symbolism of the Crusaders, "Guardians of the Holy Land", and, fundamentally, the orders of chivalry, among which the Templars, who also give their name to so many lodges, are worthy of note.

We have mentioned tradition because we recognise that the secrets, ideas and symbols that our Order holds have been handed down and received "by word of mouth" through the ages and have remained intact to this day. We would be wrong to try to change it and lose the purity of our rites or to modify the perfection of our signs. On the contrary, we are told that it is one of our main obligations to preserve the purity of that tradition which provides the spiritual influence and strength necessary to keep our construction from collapsing, and that we must defend it like warriors, for it is our true treasure that we keep hidden.

But let it not be thought that when we say "tradition" we are referring to certain antiquated customs, which have sometimes been taken as dogma, and which, far from contributing to the revival of the Order, could rather stiffen it. We are referring to those rules of a purely formal nature, which our predecessors would certainly have had valid reasons for formulating, given the conditions prevailing in their time and which are not those of the present time. A typical example of such a rule is that which prevents women from entering our temples, which is totally at odds with the present circumstances in a society in which women are participating, along with men, in all walks of life. Freemasonry is also initiation and rite; and we could recall female initiations throughout history and the involvement of women in the celebration of many of the precursor rites of our own. If we were not able to modify this kind of usage, we would be confusing the essence with the form. Tradition is the preservation of the essential within the freedom to combine forms. And what better symbol than woman to represent the subtle strength of intelligence, the grace and charm of beauty? Are not Wisdom, Science, Justice and Temperance also feminine?

We believe that we must open our arms to our dear sisters and prevent the fact that in the exercise of our freedom we organise ourselves, according to circumstances, into male or female lodges, and that we men and women Masons share in the accomplishment of the great Work entrusted to us, from continuing to be a cause of disunity in the fraternity.

We would also like to point out that our venerable association could never be considered a sect, for its universal ideals and its broad outlook are diametrically opposed to the sectarian spirit; nor even as a secret society, for it lacks the defining elements of a secret society; but it has traditionally been defined as an esoteric organisation, for it seeks the inner meaning of its symbols and those of nature. Recall that the word "esoteric" is derived from the Greek *esoterikos*, meaning "the inner".

-that which is hidden, the secret. It is associated with the arcane, the mysterious and the miraculous; and it evokes that which lies beyond sensible appearances, which is arrived at, in the opinion of many, precisely through the understanding of the symbol, its influence and its meaning. It is precisely this has given it that subtle and magical force which will make it possible for the lofty goal for which it was founded to be finally crowned and fully realised. It is this respect for mystery that instils in us the holy fear of revealing our signs of recognition and the ritual forms that characterise us, and which always places us in the presence of a profound secret, defined as inviolable by its very nature.

But this could not mean that we should hide in our lodges to selfishly guard the strength and knowledge that our organisation gives us; on the contrary, we know that we must also dare to come out into the open - as true Freemasons have always done - and put our art of building at the service humanity; This obliges us to actively participate in the construction of a new world, which implies a very great responsibility that is increased by the fact that we are facing a chaotic environment that is directing almost all its strength, its resources and its apparent intelligence towards destruction, war and pollution, which has reached such an extreme that it seriously threatens the existence of the human species and the life of the planet, as we all know.

We could not conclude this work without recalling, however briefly, some elements of the constructive symbolism which is that which in a particular way distinguishes us and which we shall have to use in the construction of that new humanity. Let us remember that the zodiacal and planetary symbols that decorate our temples remind us of the need to investigate the mysteries of cosmogony in order to understand the secrets of the Universe, which will allow us to build in a harmonious way and will teach us the identity of heaven and earth. -spirit and matter. Only in this way can we build earth, taking as our model - as did Hiram, the architect - the heavenly Jerusalem. Only in this way could the restoration of harmony, union and peace be possible.

We are told that even if we ascend to higher degrees we will always have the hammer and chisel of the apprentice, and that the work of continuing to carve and refine the rough stone is constant and permanent. That mallet or hammer, symbol of the force - especially the subtle force of intelligence and love - with which we strike our chisel to tear away the false idea of our "personality" and its aftermath of prejudice and achieve the beauty of the Work. That mason's trowel which is used for the finishing of details and we use for the perfecting of teaching and instruction; with it we correct and cover up the imperfections of our brethren, but we never use it to disguise or justify our own. That level with which we manage to find balance in our temporal life and which, together with the horizontal line of the square, marks the straight line with which we must undertake our actions in the world. And fundamentally that plumb line that allows us to place the square in its perfect perpendicularity with the level and that teaches us to undertake and continue the vertical ascending path of our inner growth.

Let us now, QQ. HH., our ineffable chain of union. If we are a real and effective part of it, and a true link in that mysterious chain, let us take full responsibility that it not be weakened by our vices and imperfections, and let us constantly remember that a single fragile link would be capable of breaking it.

Let us repeat the appeal we have dared to make to you on this solemn occasion: that we become aware of the importance of preserving intact the true tradition and of preserving and respecting the symbols and rites which are alive and therefore perpetually teach us and make our union possible; that we increase the effort which will enable us to achieve inner growth and individual perfection; and that we continue with all our strength, all as one, and guided by Love, the task begun by our forefathers of building a new and true world, whose model is the city.

The task will be crowned when we lay the cornerstone and finally achieve the restoration of Unity and Peace.

May we not regret not having fulfilled our sacred duty.

Let us take seriously and without hesitation the immense responsibility that falls to us in the fight against the prevailing chaos, and thus make it possible to re-establish internal and external order, even if quantitatively our efforts go unnoticed.

And may we never be ashamed, very QQ. and Ven. HH. to offer all our labours to the Glory of the Great Architect of the Universe.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN SIMON AND FELIPE, c. 1740

This catechism is contained in the same Ms. as The Whole Institution of Masonry, 1724. An almost illegible name and address have been found to appear therein: "Mr John Page . . . NO.

5 . . . Bristol", and was recently in the possession of the late Br [Lister] Salisbury. Receiving the typewritten copy from Bro. Cramphorn, after he had delivered this book to the printer, we had to choose at once whether to include the Dialogue in this volume, while there was still opportunity to do so, or to omit it and attempt instead to locate the Manuscript and investigate its history and authenticity, with a view to its subsequent publication. The Dialogue is similar in several points to the other early Masonic catechisms, though it does not bear much resemblance to any particular one, and prima facie there is no reason to think that it is a trap or a forgery. We decided to publish it here for the information of the reader. As soon as possible, we hope that this preliminary publication will be followed by a more detailed study in A. Q. C. [Ars Quatuor Coronatorum].

As the Dialogue is not dated and the original is not currently available examination, we have to rely entirely on internal evidence from the text to date the document. It consists of two parts; the first is a sequence of questions and answers, containing in fact three sections. The second consists of a number of notes or comments on certain answers. Apart from the oath, all the answers are short and such that a Mason could learn them by heart. The first part, therefore, apparently consists of a question and answer test, rather than an admission ceremony. In this respect it resembles the catechisms of before 1731. Some of the questions and answers have more affinity with Prichard's Masonry Dissected of 1730 [see here p. 290] than with any other known catechism. This raises the problem of whether the Dialogue is partly based on Prichard, in which case it is necessarily later than 1730, or whether it comes from an older ritual, which in part would have served as a model for Prichard. In view of the vagueness of the similarities and the many striking differences, we are disposed to think that neither catechism was based on the other, and that the questions and answers of the Dialogue may well predate 1730. By their character they certainly belong to the group of early catechisms published in this volume.

The probable date of the notes or comments, which constitutes the second part of the document, is a different matter. The "Dr Desaguliers Regulation", mentioned in the first note, presumably refers to the measure taken at

the Grand Lodge on 28 August 1730 at the suggestion of Dr. Desaguliers. This would make the autumn of this year the earliest date at which the commentaries could have been written. On the other hand, the use of the terms 'Old Masons' and 'New Masons', with the same meaning as the more usual expressions, 'Ancient Masons' and 'Modern Masons', suggests that the commentaries were written before the terms 'Ancient' and 'Modern' were well established. This would certainly have been before 1764, the year in which the second edition of Ahiman Rezon, (the Book of the Constitutions of the Grand Lodge of Ancients) which contained the well known attack on the 'Moderns' was published, and it would not be unlikely that they would have been before 1756, which was when the first edition of Ahiman Rezon appeared, the Grand Lodge of the 'Ancients' having been established in 1751. Thus, we are disposed to think that the commentaries were composed, and the Dialogue put in writing, at some date between 1730 and 1750, although the catechism itself may well have been copied from one in use before 1730. Provisionally, , we suggest as the date of the document circa 1740, a date which may require revision in the light of an examination of the original manuscript, when and if it is found.

The transcript we publish has been prepared from Brother Cramphorn's typed copy. To the best of our knowledge, the catechism has not been published before.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN SIMON, A CITY MASON, AND FELIPE, A MASON WHO IS ON A
JOURNEY

S. - Sir, I have just received, enclosed in a letter, a piece of Paper in this form; please, what do you mean by it?

F. - I am a Stranger, I seek company, And having heard that you were a Brother Mason has given me the audacity to summon you.

S. - And you, are you a Mason?

F. - (a). I am (so I am considered by all Partners and Brothers).

S. - And how shall I know that you are a Mason?

F. - (b). By the Words, Signs, Touches and Points of my Entrance.

S. - And what is the Word of a Mason?

F. - (c). The word is Recta.

S. - If it is Straight give it to me Straight.

F. - I will spell it with you, if you please.

S. - Give me the first Letter and I will give you the second.

F. - B.

S. - O.

F. - A.

S. - Z.

F. - The Word (d) is therefore BOAZ, but as you are a Stranger to me, as I am to you, and in good Prudence we are not to answer [thus] the Three questions proposed, lest we should be deceived by an Imposter, I ask you, What are [the] Signs?

S. - Signs (e) are all [or "all"] Squares, Angles and Perpendiculars.

F. - And what are [the] Toques?

S. - (f)All [the] Fraternal grips in the hand by which the Brothers recognise one another.

F. - And what are [the] points of your Admission?

S. - Keeping and Concealing the Secrets (g) of the Mason.

F. - How were you received as a Mason?

S. - By (h) Three hits on the Gate, the last at double the time distance of the first and much larger.

F. - What was the first question the Master asked you when you were admitted?

S. - Had it been of my own free will that I had gone there to be made a Mason. I answered YES.

F. - What did you see before you were made a Mason?

S. - Nothing that I understood.

F. - What did you see after ?

S. - Three Great Lights.

F. - What do you call them?

S. - The Sun, The Moon and the Master (i).

F. - How Do They Rule and Govern?

S. - The Sun the Day, the Moon the Night, the Master the Lodge.

F. - Where was your Master?

S. - East.

F. - Why in the East?

S. - To wait for the rising of the Sun and put Men to their Work.

F. - Where were the watchmen?

S. - West.

F. - Why in the West?

S. - To wait for the Sunset and discharge the Men from Their Task.

F. - Where were the Companions in Office?

S. - South.

F. - Why in the South?

S. - To receive and instruct any Brother who is a stranger.

F. - Where were the accepted apprentices?

S. - In the North, to Guard and Conceal and serve the Master.

F. - You say you saw three great Lights; did you see no other Light?

S. - Yes, one far superior to the Sun or the Moon.

F. - What was it?

S. - The Light of the Gospel.

F. - Why were you made a Mason?

S. - Because of [or: "for love"] of the letter G. (k).

F. - What does mean?

S. - GEOMETRY.

F. - Why GEOMETRY?

S. - For she is the Root and foundation of all the Arts and Sciences.

F. - And please tell me how much money you had in your pocket when you were made a Freemason?

S. - None at all.

F. - And how were you made a Mason?

S. - Neither Naked nor Clothed, Neither Standing nor Lying, Neither Kneeling nor Standing, Neither Barefoot nor Shod, but in due form.

F. - What does this Form look like?

S. - Upon my bended and uncovered knee with a Compass open square to my Chest. And then and there I took the sacred and solemn Oath of a Mason.

F. - Repeat your Oaths.

S. - I do solemnly swear and declare before God and this Worshipful Meeting that I will Heal or Hear, Conceal, and never reveal, the Secrets or Secrets [or "the Silence"] of a Mason or of Masonry which have been revealed to me, or which may now or be revealed to me, to any Man, Woman or Child; nor will I print, stamp or engrave them upon anything Movable or Immovable or in any other manner. By which the secrets of a Mason or of Masonry may be discovered. Under the Penalty [that] my Heart [be] torn from my left Breast, my Tongue from the shelter of my mouth, my Throat cut, [and] my Body torn to pieces by Wild horses, buried in the Sands of the Sea where the Tide flows in 24 hours, taken and

burnt to Ashes and carried to where the four winds blow so that no more Memories of me remain. SO HELP ME GOD. Then the First WATCHMAN put upon me a White apron with these words: "I clothe you with the Emblem of the Mason, more Ancient and Honourable than [that of] the Knights of the Garter".

F. - I am satisfied, you are a Mason according to the Repetition of your Oath. If you please, you may ask me any Questions you may think fit.

S. - I ask you, where was your Lodge located?

F. - In the Valley of Jehoshaphat where there comes not the clucking of a Hen, the crowing of a Cock, [nor] the barking of a Dog.

S. - How high was your Lodge?

F. - As high as the Heavens and as low as the Earth (m).

S. - How many Pillars did your Lodge have?

F. - Three.

S. - What did you call them?

F. - Beauty (n) Strength and Wisdom.

S. - What do they represent?

F. - Beauty to Adorn, Strength to Sustain, and Wisdom to Devise.

S. - Which Lodge are you from?

F. - Of the Right Worshipful Lodge of St. John.

S. - How many Signs does a Franc Mason have?

F. - Five.

S. - What do you call them?

F. - PEDESTAL-MANUAL-PECTORAL-GUTTURAL-ORAL.

Translation: J. M. R.

[NOTES: from the manuscript itself]

(a)

"So I am considered by all Companions and Brethren". This is the way Old Masons answer this question. But the New Masons under the Regulation of J. T. Desaguliers answer only "I AM".

(b)

"By [the] Words, Signs, Touches and Points of my Entrance". How the Old and New Masons differ. The New Masons answer "By [the] Signs, Touches and Points of my Admission".

(c)

The Word is Straight [or "Right"]. This answer is quite subtle. The Word of a Mason is BOAZ. But they reply that the Word is Straight ["Right"] and that they will spell the Word with you, etc. It is to guard against Impostors deceiving them. Besides, the Frank Masons make use of the Word Right as often as they can, with some introduction into the conversation, for all they do is right, as their "Right knee bent", their "Right hand on the Bible", etc.

(d)

"The word is therefore BOAZ. This is the word of a Mason, which is taken from the 7th chapter of Kings I, verse 21: "And he set up the pillars in the porch of the Temple. And he set up the Pillar on the right and called it Jakin, and he set up the Pillar on the left and called it Boaz" [The quotation corresponds more or less to II Chron. 3:17]. This verse is read after you have sworn. And often the whole Chapter.

(e)

Here the New Masons say the word "All", and say only "Squares, Angles and Perpendiculars".

(f)

"All Fraternal Grips on the hand? Which occurs when in shaking hands they press the Knuckle of the first finger of your Right hand which they call the Boaz column. If he has passed [to] Fellow Craft or Watcher, he presses with his Thumb the Knuckle of the next long finger, which is called JAKIN, the Column of the Right - for Jakin is the word of a Watcher.

(g)

Keep and Conceal this part of the Old Oath, but the New Masons [answer it?] by pointing to their Left breast with their Finger.

(h)

By three solemn Knocks at the Gate, the last at twice the distance of Time and much greater. Before the door through which you are admitted stands an Accepted Apprentice with a drawn sword, to guard it against droppers, as they call them, and that they may not Spy. For in this they are very Cautious, and the Question often asked is "Is it Tiled?"

the House?". If it is safe from eavesdropping, the answer is: "It is COVERED". If it is not, or any Person at the Meeting is not a Mason: "UNCLOCKED". The Most Recent Apprentice takes you by the hand and knocks three times at the Door. The Master asks who it is. And the Apprentice replies: "One who has the desire to be made a Mason". The Master replies, "Send him in". N. B.: The reason for these three Knocks is not known to the Apprentices but to the Master, and comes from HIRAM, Grand Master in the TEMPLE OF SOLOMON, who was murdered by his three Apprentices and killed by the third Knock, which the last Apprentice gave him, and that because he would not reveal the secrets to them.

(i)

The Sun, Moon and Master are three large candles in large wooden Candlesticks carved in all Orders, and placed in a Triangular form over the Lodge. The Lodge, as here represented, is commonly made with white ribbon nailed to the Floor; round it, as you see, the letters E for East, S for South, etc., made of thin Silver or very thin Tin. And just as [there is] the letter G on the top, so in the Lodges now constituted there is a Square, a Square, a Compass, and a Plumb Line placed on the top of the Lodge. The Officers of the Lodge stand in their respective places forming a Square with their right foot in contact with their Left, their left hand hanging in a perpendicular line and their Right hand on their left breast forming a Square with their Fingers and Thumb, with their Aprons on, and Gloves on their right. This is the Posture and the great sign which any Mason would make from the top of a House, and is called the Posture of a Mason.

(k)

You can see why the G is placed in the middle of the Lodge.

(l)

NONE AT ALL. This is a very skilful Question to discover an Impostor, for they strip you of all Metal that you have on you, such as your money, the Buckles of your Shoes, etc., and give this reason for it: That in the building of the Temple no Metal was heard of. According to the 6th Chapter, I Kings, 7th verse: "And when the House was built it was made of Stone which had been prepared before it was brought there. Thus no hammer, Axe, or Iron tool was heard in the House while it was under Construction."

(m)

As low as the Earth, as high as the Heavens, for all Lodges were formerly held in the Open Field.

(n)

"Beauty, Strength and Wisdom". These three things are necessary in great Constructions.

***** feli 1 graphic

***** feli 2 graphic

THE WILKINSON MANUSCRIPT, c. 1727

(D. KNOOP, G. P. JONES AND D.

HAMER)

INTRODUCTION

Direct Provenance of Manuscript. In March 1946, Bro. B.A. Swinden of Northampton drew our attention to this manuscript belonging to Bro. Harold Wilkinson of Pomfret Lodge, No. 360, Pomfret Lodge, Northampton, who found it among the papers of his late father, Bro. Samuel Blaze Wilkinson (1851-1931) of 69 Billing Road, Northampton. Br Wilkinson kindly consented to give us the manuscript for examination and reproduction, and authorised us to send it to Dr B. Schofield in the MSS [manuscripts] department of the British Museum for further examination.

After the manuscript was returned to Northampton, it was donated Br Wilkinson to the Masonic Library there.

Unfortunately, Bro. Wilkinson has no information about the history of the document and does not know how it came into the possession of his father, who, in his day, was a stalwart of Pomfret Lodge and a prominent member of the Guild, [Royal] Arch, Mark [Mason], K[night] T[emplar] and Rosa Cruz. His interest in the historical side of Freemasonry is evident from the fact that he was in possession of this document which we have designated as the Wilkinson Manuscript, and a small notebook containing copies of what appear to be relatively early (pre-1813 -?) versions of

1) the "First Degree Lecture" and 2) the "Traditional History". Bro. Wilkinson knows nothing about his grandfather's family; and as for his grandmother's, three of them were Quarry Masons, and only one, who was an engineer, was a Freemason. The origins of his family seem to be in Clipsham, Rutland, although at least three of its members came to Northampton and were connected with the quarries at Harlestone, which are a mile or two away from his present township. The Freemason engineer mentioned above, who lived in Wellingborough, apparently showed very little interest in the Guild. Samuel Blaze Wilkinson appears to have lived all his life in Northampton. Pomfret's Lodge was not legitimised until 1819; however there was a Lodge at the George, Northampton, constituted on 16 January 1730 as No. 62,1 and incorrectly numbered 602 in Prichard's The Dissected Masonry [see here] for October 1730. In 1740 it became No. 64 and disappeared on 29 November 1754.3 Although the Wilkinson Manuscript appears to represent an earlier ritual than Prichard's, there is no evidence that it was practised in any Northampton Lodge. Nor can it be assumed, for reasons to be discussed later, that the document was written as early as 1730.

Paper Type and Format. The paper, which is of legal size, 12 7/8" x 7 7/8", is handmade, of good quality, and bears the watermark VRYHEYT and the letters GR with a crown on top, as a countermark. We will refer to these marks below, and take them as a reference for the analysis of the age of the paper. Three such loose leaves were folded in half to form a booklet of six half-leaves or twelve pages. Subsequently the two outer leaves were either badly worn or torn from the sheet: the countermark appears along the original fold of these leaves and their two halves correspond perfectly, proof that each pair of half-leaves originally formed a single sheet.

The first half-sheet, which constitutes what we describe as pages i and ii, was originally blank on both sides, except for what appears to be a Masonic mark - LL-, something like two inverted V's placed side by side, which appears at the top of page i, made at the top of page i, and which was made at the top of page ii.

It appears to be in the same ink and style of writing as the text. It was possibly the mark of the scribe who copied the document. At a later date, the words "Ancient Ritual" were added under the mark in pencil, and in ink and in pen "S. B. Wilkinson|69, Billing Road,|Northampton". Each half-sheet was engraved with an embossed letterhead displaying this address: 69, BILLING ROAD,|NORTHAMPTON, visible on the photographic reproduction of page i and barely discernible on the other sheets; it was placed so as not to affect the text. In close proximity to the embossed letterhead, or sometimes superimposed, is the signature 'S. B. Wilkinson' on pages 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9.

The writer considered the first page of text as page 1 of the manuscript: he did not number it but began on its recto with the number "2". Thus we have the sequence:

p.i: blank, except for the "mark" and subsequent additions. p.ii: blank.

p.1: begins the text, unnumbered by the writer. p.2: continues the text, numbered 2.

p.3:= id. 3.

p.4:= id. 4.

p.5:= id. 5.

p.6:= id. 6.

p.7:= id. 7.

p.8: = id., unnumbered by the writer. p.9: = id., unnumbered by the writer. p.10:= id., unnumbered by the writer.

At one time, these sheets were held together by three small pear-shaped wire clips. The small round hole which appears as a black mark in the photographic reproduction on pages i, ii, 1, 2, 9 and 10 was caused by -Swinden informs us - by a rusty paper clip which, when removed, took part of the pages with it. The marks made by the two remaining paper clips can be seen in the photographic reproduction on page 10. At some point, the pages were folded horizontally in three parts and the marks of these folds are visible in the photographic reproduction on page i.

Spelling and Text Manuscript. Its main features are:

(a) The use of the long s, as in Question 1.

(b) The & sign is usually the same as the scribe's long-tailed x, as in answers 2 and 3; occasionally a modern form appears, as in answers 8 and 28, salutation (13), and oath (23).

(c) The old e is used, as seen in answers 1, 2 and 3.

(d) The capital I and J are both written as I.

(e) The form I'll [future, 1st person singular] is apparently written as I'le. This is probably a personal peculiarity of the scribe and not a spelling mistake. Comparable to the levele which appears instead of levell [level] on P. 48 and R. 49.

(f) Occasional use of -ick endings.

(g) The occasional doubling of single consonants at the end of words: settt [cobblestone], Jewell [jewel], Urnell [fine-grained white stone], Levell [level].

(h) The occasional use of yt for that [demonstrative form], yr for your [possessive form] and shod for should [subjunctive form].

(i) Indiscriminate use of capital letters in nouns and sometimes in verbs.

(j) Verb forms ending in -ed are written with all their letters and not with the -'d form, with two exceptions: introduc'd ["introduced"] in Question 24 and until'd ["discovered"] in Q. 76.

(k) Very poor punctuation: question marks, full stops at the end of answers, and apostrophes indicating possession are frequently omitted.

The type of writing, in our opinion, belongs to the period between 1700 and 1820, but the use of handmade paper (assuming it does not come from old stocks) almost certainly places it in the eighteenth century. This is confirmed by the uses mentioned in a, b, c, d, f, g, and h above, which are more frequent in the eighteenth century than in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the almost constant use of -ed instead of -'d in past tenses and participles seems to point to the second half of the eighteenth century rather than the first.

Watermark and Countermark. The watermark "VRYHEYT" on our document points both to the Dutch origin of the paper and to its production by French craftsmen, free imitators of Dutch paper and its letterheads. The fact that neither the name of the manufacturer nor his initials nor any other mark appear on our sheets leads us to believe that it is not Dutch paper but its French imitation. The use of the countermark GR with the Crown shows that the paper was made exclusively for the English market.

In W.A. Churchill's *Watermarks in Paper in the XVII and XVIII Centuries*, approximately thirty examples of the VRYHEYT mark are reproduced. In the earliest examples, dating from 1654 to 1720, the Lion, the Lance and the Seven Darts, as well as the base with the word VRYHEYT, are surrounded by a kind of garland. On the latter, which date from 1704 to c. 1813, the Lion, the Lance, etc., are within a crowned circle displaying the motto *Pro Patria ejusque Libertate*. Our specimen obviously belongs to this second group. A detailed examination of this group shows:

(I) that in some specimens the base containing the word VRYHEYT is drawn with single lines and in others with double lines, as in our case.

(II) that in most cases the spear or staff ends in a point. In three of the examples in Churchill's work it ends, as in ours, in what might be described as a St. Andrew's Cross, X. All of Churchill's examples with a double-line base belong to the period 1746 to 1813, and his three examples with the crozier ending in a St. Andrew's Cross fall between 1762 and 1813.

It was common for Dutch or French paper manufacturers, when producing paper for the British market, to use the British Royal Cipher as a countermark. In our case, that cipher is GR, which was in force during the four Georges (1714-1830). The only example Churchill gives of a VRYHEYT mark with a crowned GR as a countermark is a manuscript dated 1785, although it is quite possible that paper was produced with this mark and countermark before that year.

Relationship to other Catechisms. The Ms. Wilkinson is more closely related to the "Enter'd 'Prentice's Degree" of Prichard's Dissected Masonry, published in October 1730, than any other previously known version of the early Masonic Catechisms, including A Dialogue between Simon and Philip [see here p. 239] of the year 17254[- 1740], whose affinity with the first part of Dissected Masonry we noted in our writing on the Dialogue in A.Q.C. LVII. The order of the questions and answers in the Wilkinson Manuscript and in Prichard is different. Moreover, the Ms. Wilkinson contains about a dozen questions and answers which are not found in Prichard, and conversely, Prichard, in Part I, contains about twenty questions and answers for which no equivalence is found in our manuscript. There are about sixty-five questions and answers more or less the same in the two catechisms, though they sometimes differ in the manner of constructing the former and in the exact substance of the latter. These questions will be dealt with in detail in the transcription of the Ms. Wilkinson which we shall show in parallel columns together with the "Enter'd 'Prentice's Degree" of Freemasonry Dissected. For the present we must be content to say that we do not regard our paper simply as an earlier and shorter version of Prichard's first part. Nor do we believe that Prichard's First Degree ritual is directly derived from that described in our manuscript; however, both derive, though along different lines, from a common ancestor, and the one reflected in our paper is somewhat earlier than Prichard's. The latter was published in October 1717. The latter was published in October 1730, and that described in the former appears to be more recent than that expressed in The Grand Mystery of Free-Masons Discover'd of 1724, so we are inclined to date the mode of working described in Ms. Wilkinson to about the year 1727.

Manuscript Date. Although internal evidence suggests that the ritual represented in our document belongs to the year 1727, this does not mean that the date of the manuscript is the same. We must bear in mind the possibility that it may be a copy both before and after 1730, from a manuscript prior to that date, and not a catechism written from memory. In two cases, P. 31 and P. 62, an essential word is omitted; in two other cases, R. 32 and R. 65, a word is repeated. Both errata suggest copying errors. On the other hand, the separation of two questions and answers, Q. 62 and R. 73, on the secrets of a Mason, and the omission of a question and answer relating to the key to those secrets, of which Q. and R. 73 is the amplification, suggest either a memorised account, or a copy of a faulty version written earlier. The fact that some questions and answers do not appear in a very logical order also somewhat suggests the idea of a memorised account. The question is, when was it copied, or, if it is an original, when was it written?

The answer will depend, at least in part, on the purpose for which the document was copied or written: (I) it could be an eighteenth century antiquarian copy of a catechism from the turn of the century; or (II) a copy made by some Mason whose attention was captivated by an ancient document that came into his hands; or (III) an aide memoire of some Mason, possibly made by another more experienced Mason to assist his less experienced Brother.

(I) If the document served the first purpose, it might as well be expected to be (a) written in a commonplace book, like the Drinkwater and Huddleston versions of the Old Charges and two other catechisms, the Institution of Free Masons and the Ms. Essex; as (b) carefully and rigorously copied on a roll by an efficient scribe, like the Ms. Chesham, or in a small leather-bound book, like the Ms. Chesham, or in a small leather-bound book, like the Ms. Chesham and the Ms. Chesham. Essex [Manuscript]; as that: b) it was carefully and rigorously copied on a roll by an efficient scribe, like Ms. Chesham, or in a small leather-bound book like Ms. Woodford and Ms. Supreme Council. Our document, with its missing pages and

its various corrections, does not fit any of these conditions. Nor is six leaves from the centre of a normal book, since in that case, the trimming necessary for the binding of the book would have made the three legal-format sheets smaller than they actually are.

(II) The considerations set out above could not apply to the case of a copy made by someone interested in an ancient document which has come into his hands, as J. L. Higsom did in 1852 when he copied a version of the Old Charges, now known as the Ms. Wren;⁶ or as Bro.

T. Cramphorn around 1930 when typing out A Dialogue between Simon and Philip, when Bro. Lister Salisbury passed on to him the original manuscript, of which there is no trace since his death. The transcription in our Early Masonic Catechisms was obtained from Bro. Cramphorn's typewritten copy. Similarly, the transcription of the document now reproduced in facsimile form may be a copy, made in the second half of the eighteenth century, of an original written several decades earlier.

(III) Three characteristics of Ms. Wilkinson, namely:

a) the horizontal fold in three parts (although not very strong judging by the marks, visible only on page i of the photographic reproduction and invisible on the others);

b) the worn condition of the two outer leaves along the folds which originally represented half of the leaves when they folded to form a booklet;

c) discolouration of the outer pages, i and 10, clearly visible in the photographic reproductions;

suggest that the document must have been heavily used, possibly because it served as an aide memoire to a freemason. If it had always been folded horizontally in three parts, only two-thirds of the front page would show obvious deterioration of the colours, so we assume that it was usually kept unfolded, sometimes with page i at the top and sometimes with page 10, somewhere exposed to dust, as would be the case in most chests of drawers. The frequent insertion and removal of the papers from their drawer could explain the occasional deterioration and wear that our manuscript shows, in which case there is no dispute about the idea that it served as a mason's aide memoire. Of the three possible uses for the document, we are content, for the reasons given above, to say that the document is not a copy of an ancient Masonic manual specially produced by or for some eighteenth-century antiquarian. We are then left with two possibilities, and so we propose to approach the problem of dating the document, firstly, on the hypothesis that it was the aide memoire of some Mason; and secondly, on the hypothesis that it was a copy made by someone who had access to an older document, which caught his attention.

(I) The first hypothesis seems to lead to a relatively early date, since we find it difficult to believe that the mode of working described in our manuscript was practised until long after the appearance of Prichard's booklet in October 1730, although in that decade, and possibly also in the 1940s, there may have been lodges outside the London area where Dissected Masonry was not known, or where stalwart local Masons did not look favourably on the work of modifying or revising the ritual. On the other hand, one cannot overlook the fact that our document shows various indications of having been in use for some time after it had been

copied or written, and presumably dates from some time before the ritual it represents was replaced by one that is more current in the locality to which it relates.

In view of this somewhat conflicting evidence, there is no definite conclusion as to the date of the manuscript - assuming that it was used as a mason's aide memoire. All that seems fairly certain is that the work described in Ms Wilkinson, judging by its state of evolution, represents an original ritual of a date after 1724 and before 1730, although it is always possible that once established in a particular locality it was relatively stable and continued to be used more or less unchanged for a number of years after 1730. The fact that the printing in three official editions, plus one pirated, and at least one newspaper reprint of *The Masonry Dissected* appeared within the first fortnight of its publication on 20 October 1730; that eight editions appeared in London in the following decade; and that the booklet was reprinted in the following decade; and that the booklet was reprinted more than eight times in England and Scotland in the 407s is generally accepted evidence that Prichard exerted a major influence on Masonic ritual for a decade, or possibly two decades, and not just for a few months after its appearance. Thus, it seems unlikely that the work described in Ms. Wilkinson was used in an unaltered form long after 1740, if it even reached that time. Since the Ms. Wilkinson, judging by its condition, was written some years before it ceased to serve as an aide memoire - assuming that it was indeed dedicated to this use - it must be presumed to have been written between 1730 and 1740.

Since this date is not compatible with the relatively concrete dating evidence provided by the paper mark and the spelling of the text, except on the assumption that a) the almost constant use in our document of the ending -ed instead of -d in the past tenses and participles of verbs was due to scribal pedantry, and b) the relatively late appearance of our particular variety of the VRYHEYT mark in Churchill's book was due to the fact that his collection of copies was incomplete; and b) the relatively late appearance of our particular variety of the mark VRYHEYT in Churchill's book was due to the fact that his collection of copies was incomplete, we believe that the approximate date of 1730 to 1740, though not impossible, is not very likely either.

(II) On the second hypothesis, namely that the document is a copy of an early eighteenth-century handbook by someone who had access to an old manuscript and was interested in it, the problem of dating depends entirely on external evidence, such as the type of writing, the spelling of the text, and the mark and countermark on the paper. As for the type of writing, we concur with the opinion of Dr. B. Schofield of the MSS. Department of the British Museum that the document is in a typical eighteenth-century script. As noted above, certain features of the spelling belong more to the second half of the eighteenth century than to the first half of the eighteenth century. Also, as mentioned above, although variations of the VRYHEYT mark are found on papers dating from the second half of the seventeenth century and all of the eighteenth century, examples of the more elaborate VRYHEYT mark, such as the one on our document, have been placed by Churchill only between the years 1762 and c. 1813 or so. In view of these considerations - assuming now that the Ms. Wilkinson was a copy of an older manuscript made by some Mason interested in it - we should place the date of the document between 1750 and 1790.

Our conclusions regarding the date of the manuscript must necessarily be very vague, since we do not know with certainty whether the document was (a) an aide mémoire, or (b) a copy made by someone who found an old document that interested him. In the first case, the most likely date is between about 1730 and 1740, and in the second between 1750 and 1790. These uncertainties as to the date of the document do not in any way affect our opinion as to the period of the ritual described in our document, which, as we have already indicated above, we consider to belong to the period 1724-1730.

Treatment of the text. ? In our printed transcript ? the Ms. Wilkinson can be compared with the first part of Prichard's The Dissected Freemasonry. The order of the questions and answers in the latter has been rearranged to correspond, as far as possible, with those in our document. Blank spaces have been inserted in both texts in cases where a question or answer from one text does not find its equivalent in the other. For ease of reference, and to show the different order of the questions in the two manuals, we have inserted numbers in brackets before the questions in both texts, thus maintaining the original numerical order of the questions. [There are no blanks or numbers in the original Ms. Wilkinson. Likewise, there are no blanks or numbering of the questions in the original of Prichard's Dissected Freemasonry.

[In the Spanish translation the initial capital letters and ninety percent of the punctuation have been respected; in the Ms. Wilkinson the questions do not have question marks; and in both questions and answers there is an abundance of "&" signs instead of commas, full stops and the conjunction].

TEXTS FROM MS. WILKINSON AND THE FIRST PART OF "FREEMASONRY DISSECTED".

NOTES

1
Lane, Masonic Records 55.

2
E.M.C. [Early Masonic Catechisms], 173; Lane, Handy Book to the Lists of Lodges, 179.

3
Lane, Masonic Records, 55.

4
See our Reply to Comments in our A.Q.C. article. LVII.

5
Reprinted in E.M.C., 76.

6

For more details on these Mss. see our Handlist of Masonic Documents.

7

Thorp, Bibliography of Masonic , 15-16; E.M.C. , 157.

THE DISSECTED MASONRY by S. Prichard, 1730

MASONRY DISSECTED: An Authentic and Universal Description of all its Branches from the Origin to the Present. As conveyed in the Regularly Constituted Lodges both in Town and Country, according to the Different Degrees of Admission. Offering an Impartial Version of the Regular Procedure of Initiation of its New Members into the Three Degrees of Freemasonry, that is, I. Entered Apprentice, II. Master. To which is added the Author's Justification made by himself. Third Edition. By Samuel Prichard, a recent Member of a Constituted Lodge. London: Printed for J. Wilford, at The Three Fleurs-de-Lis, behind the Chapter-House near St. Paul's. 1730. 1730. (Price 6d.)

Samuel Prichard Swore: That the enclosed Copy is a True and Authentic Copy in all its Particulars.

Jur' 13. Die Oct. 1730. coram me, R. Hopkins.

Sam. Prichard.

To the Most Worshipful and Honourable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons.

Brethren and Companions,

If the following Pages, written without Partisanship, achieve universal Applause for so worthy a Society, I doubt not that the general Character of it will spread and be appreciated by the remaining Civilised Part of Mankind: Which, I hope, will afford entire Satisfaction to all the Lovers of Truth, and I shall , with all humble Submission, the Most Obedient and Humble Servant of the Fraternity,

Sam. Prichard.

Masonry Dissected

The original Institution of Freemasonry consisted in the Foundation of the Liberal Arts and Sciences; but more especially of the Fifth, that is to say, of Geometry. It was during the Building of the Tower of Babel that the Art and Mystery of Freemasonry was first made known, and from there it was transmitted by Euclid, a worthy and excellent Mathematician of the Egyptians, who communicated it to Hiram, the Master Mason connected with the Building of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, where there was an excellent and expert Mason who was the head of the Masonry Department.

under his Grand Master Hiram, whose name was Mannon Grecus, who taught the Art of Masonry to one Carolos Marcil in France, who was thereafter elected King of France, and from thence was carried to England in the Time of King Athelstone, who ordered that there should be an Assembly every Year at York, which was his first Introduction into England, and Masons were made in the Manner following.

Tunc unus ex Senioribus teneat Librum, ut illi vel ille ponant vel ponat Manus supra Librum; tum Praecepta debeant legi. That is to say, While one of the Ancients held the Book, he or they laid their Hands on the Book, while the Master¹ was to read the Laws or Duties.

These Duties were: That they were to be truthful to each other without Exception, and that they would be bound to relieve the Destitution of their Brothers and Companions, or give them work and compensate them adequately.

But in these latter Days Freemasonry is not composed of Craftsmen, as it was in its first State, when [only] a few Catechetical Questions were necessary to declare a Man sufficiently qualified to be an Operative Mason.

The Terms Free and Accepted Masonry (as it now is) had not been heard of till a few Years ago; had not been heard of Constituted Lodges or Quarterly Communications till 1691, when Lords and Dukes, Lawyers and Grand Merchants, and other minor Professionals, not excepting Porters, were admitted into this Mystery or non-Mystery; The former were received by a very large Disbursement, the latter by a moderate Fee, and the latter by the Disbursement of six or seven Shillings, for which they received that Badge of Honour, which (they say) is older and more honourable than the Star and Jack, Antiquity being counted, according to the Rules of Masonry as delivered by its Tradition, even from Adam, which I will leave to the consideration of the candid Reader.

From the Accepted Masons sprang the Authentic Masons,² from both the Gormogons, whose Origin their Grand Master the Volgi deduces from the Chinese, and whose Writings, if they are to be believed, maintain the Hypothesis of the Pre-Adamites, and must consequently be older than Masonry.

The freest and most open Society is that of the Great Kaihebar, which consists of a select Company of Responsible People, whose main Discourse is that concerning Trade and Business, and the promotion of mutual Friendship without Coercion or Restraint.

But if, after his Admission into the Secrets of Masonry, any new Brother should dislike his Proceedings, and having reflected to himself how easily he has been cajoled out of his Money, decline the Fraternity or exclude himself from the Register of Quarterly Lodge Disbursements and Quarterly Communiqués, he will be denied the Privilege (as a Visiting Brother) of knowing the Mystery for which he has already paid, which is a legal and Regular Lodge, although he has been lawfully admitted into a Constituted and Regular Lodge, he will be denied the Privilege (as a Visiting Brother) of knowing the Mystery for which he has already paid, which is a manifest Contradiction according to the very Institution of Freemasonry, as will be evident from the following Treatise.

Grade of Apprentice Accepted

P. - Where do you come from?

R. - Of the Sacred Lodge of St. John.

P. - What recommendations do you bring back from there?

R. - The Recommendations which I bring from the Most Worshipful Brethren and Companions of the Most Worshipful and Sacred Lodge of St. John from whence I come, and who salute you threefold with all their hearts.

P. - What have you come here to do?

R. - Not to do my own Will,
But to continually subjugate my Passion;
To put into practice the Rules of
Freemasonry, And thus make daily Progress.

P. - Are you a Freemason?

R. - Thus am I received and Accepted among [the] Brethren and Companions.

P. - How would I know you are a Freemason?

R. - By Signs and Touches and Perfect Points of my Entrance.

P. - What are [the] Signs?

R. - All [or "all] Squares, Angles and Perpendiculars.

P. - What are [the] Toques?

R. - Certain Regular and Fraternal Grips.

Exam. - Give me your Entry Points.

R. - Give me the first, and I will give you the second.

Exam. - I salute you.

R. - I Hide it.3

Exam. - What are you hiding?

R. - All the Secrets and Secrecy of Masons and Freemasonry, except to a True and Rightful Brother after due Examination, or in a just and venerable Lodge of Brethren and Companions, well assembled.

P. - Where did you become a Mason?

R. - In a Just and Perfect Lodge.

P. - What constitutes a Just and Perfect Lodge?

R. - Seven or more.

P. - What do they consist of?

R. - One Master, two Watchers, two Companions of the Craft and two Accepted Apprentices.

P. - What constitutes a Lodge?

R. - Five.

P. - What do they consist of?

R. - One Master, two Watchers, one Fellow Craft, one Accepted Apprentice.

P. - Who led you to the Lodge?

R. - An Apprentice Accepted.

P. - How did he lead you?

R. - Neither naked nor clothed, neither barefooted nor , deprived of all Metal and in a correct Posture.

P. - How did you gain [your] Admission?

R. - For three great blows.

P. - Who received you?

R. - A Second Watchman.

P. - How did he dispose of you?

R. - He took me to the Northeast part of the Lodge, and brought me back to the West and handed me over to the First Warden.

P. - What did the First Watchman do with you?

R. - He introduced me, and showed me how to go up (by three Steps) to the Master.

P. - What did the Master do with you?

R. - He made me a Mason.

P. - How did a Mason make you?

R. - With my Knee uncovered and bent and my Body within the Square, the Compass extended to my bare Left Breast, my bare Right Hand upon the Holy Bible; there I took the Pledge (or Oath) of a Mason.

P. - Can you repeat that Commitment?

R. - I will endeavour to do so. (Which is as follows.)

By this Act I do solemnly Vow and Swear in the Presence of Almighty God and this Most Worshipful Assembly, that I will keep ["hail"] and Conceal, and never Reveal the Secrets or Secrets of Masons or Masonry, which may be Revealed to me; except to a True and Lawful Brother, after due Examination, or in a just and Worshipful Lodge of Brethren and Companions well assembled.

And I further Promise and Vow, that I will not Write, Print, Mark, Mark, Carve or Engrave them, or cause them to be Written, Printed, Marked, Marked, Carved or Engraved on Wood or Stone, so that the Impression or Visible Character of a Letter may appear, and be [thus] illegitimately obtained.

All this under no less Grief than to have my Throat cut, my Tongue extracted from the Palate, my Heart torn from under my Left Breast, to be buried under the Sands of the Sea, at the Distance of a Cable from the Shore, where the Tide ebbs and rises twice in 24 Hours, my Body burnt to Ashes, my Ashes scattered over the Face of the Earth so that there shall be no more Remembrance of me among the Masons.

God help me.

P. - What is the Form of the Lodge?

R. - A long Square [= a double Square].

P. - How long?

R. - East to West.

P. - How wide?

R. - North to South.

P. - How high [is it]?

R. - Countless Inches, Feet and Yards, as high as the Heavens.

P. - How deep?

R. - To the Centre of the Earth

P. - Where is the Lodge located?

R. - On Holy Ground, on the highest Hill or in the deepest Valley, or in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, or in any other secret Place.

P. - How is it situated?

R. - Duly East and West.

P. - Why so?

R. - Because all Churches and Chapels are or should be.

P. - What sustains [a] Lodge?

R. - Three great Pillars.

P. - What are they called?

R. - Wisdom, Strength and Beauty

P. - Why so?

R. - Wisdom to invent, Strength to sustain, and Beauty to adorn.

P. - What Deck do you have for the Lodge?

R. - A Canopy of clouds of various Colours (or the Clouds).

P. - Do you have any Equipment in your Lodge?

R. - Yes.

P. - What is it?

R. - The] Mosaic Pavement, [the] Flaming Star and [the] Jagged Festoon.⁴

P. - What are they?

R. - The] Mosaic Pavement the Floor of the Lodge, [the] Flaming Star the Centre, and [the] Festooned Festoon the Surrounding Border.

P. - What is the other Equipment of your Lodge?

R. - the] Bible, [the] Compass and [the] Square.

P. - To whom do they properly belong?

R. - The] Bible to God, [the] Compass to the Master and [the] Square to the Fellow Craftsman.

P. - Do you have jewellery in the Lodge?

R. - Yes.

P. - How many?

R. - Six. Three Movable and three Immovable.

P. - What are the Movable Jewels?

R. - Square, the] Level and Plumb.

P. - What are its Uses?

R. - the] Square to set True and Straight Rows, [the] Level to check all Horizontals, and the Plumb to check all Verticals.

P. - What are the Immovable Jewels?

R. - , [The] Rustic Ashlar, and [The] Chipped Stone.⁵

P. - What are its Uses?

R. - The] Tracing Slate for the Master to draw his Plans upon, [the] Rustic Ashlar for the Fellow to try his Tools upon, and the Rough Stone for the Accepted Apprentice to learn to work upon.

P. - Is there a Light in your Lodge?

R. - Yes, Tres.

P. - What do they represent?

R. - Sun, the] Moon and [the] Master Mason.

N.B.: These Lights are three large Candles set in tall Candlesticks.

P. - Why [is it] like that?

R. - The] Sun to rule the Day, [the] Moon the Night, and [the] Master Mason his Lodge.

P. - Do you have fixed Lights in your Lodge?

R. - Yes.

P. - How many?

R. - Three.

N.B.: These fixed Lights are Three Windows, which are supposed (though vainly) to be in every Room where a Lodge meets, but more properly they are the four Cardinal Points according to the ancient Rules of Freemasonry.

P. - How are they situated?

R. - East, South West.
and

P. - What are the your Utilities?

R. - Enlighten Man to, in and from his Work.
the

P. - Why not Are there Lights in the North?

R. - Because the Sun does not cast Rays from there.

P. - Where does your Master stand?

R. - In the East.

P. - For what reason?

R. - As the Sun rises in the East and opens the Day, so the Master stands in the East (with his Right Hand on his Left Breast as a Sign, and the Square [hanging] round his Neck) to open the Lodge and set his Men to Work.

P. - Where are your Watchers located?

R. - In the West.

P. - What is your duty?

R. - As the Sun sets in the West to close the Day, so the Watchers stand in the West (with their Right Hand on their Left Breast as Sign, and the Level and Plumb around their Necks) to close the Lodge and discharge the Men from their Labour, paying their Wages.

P. - Where does the Senior Accepted Apprentice stand?

R. - In the South.

P. - What is your duty?

R. - To listen and receive instructions and to welcome foreign Brothers.

P. - Where does the Most Recent Accepted Apprentice stand?

R. - In the North.

P. - What is your duty?

R. - Keep out all Cowans and Eves-droppers.

P. - If a Cowan (or Spy) is caught, how is he to be punished?

R. - By placing him under the Eaves of the Houses (in Rainy Weather) until the Water enters his Shoulders and overflows from his Shoes.

P. - What are the Secrets of a Freemason?

R. - Signs, Touches and various Words.

P. - Where do you keep these Secrets?

R. - Under my Left Chest.

P. - Do you have a Key to these Secrets?

R. - Yes.

P. - Where do you keep it?

R. - In a Bone-Bone Box that opens and closes only with Ivory Keys.

P. - Does it hang or does it lie?7

R. - Hang up.

P. - What do you hang up on?

R. - of a Tow-Line of 9 inches or one span.

P. - What metal is it?

R. - Of no kind of Metal at ; yet a Tongue of good Speech is as good behind a Brother's Back as before his Face.

N.B.: The Key is the Tongue, the Bone-Box the Teeth, the Drag-Line the Palate.8

P. - How many Principles are there in Freemasonry?

R. - Four.

P. - What are they?

R. - [the] Point, [the] Line, [the] Surface and [the] Solid.

P. - Explain them.

R. - The] Point, the Centre (round which the Master cannot err); [the] Line, Length without Width; [the] Surface, Length and Width; [the] Solid comprises the whole.

P. - How many Signs-Principles?

R. - Four.

P. - What are they?

R. - Guttural, Pectoral, Manual, Pedestal.

P. - Explain them.

R. - [the] Guttural the Throat, [the] Pectoral the Breast, [the] Manual the Hand; [the] Pedestal the Feet.

P. - What do you learn from being a Gentleman Mason?

R. - Secrecy, Morality and Good Fellowship

P. - What do you learn from being an Operational Mason?

R. - Colour, Square, Shape-Stone,9 set a Level and raise a Perpendicular.

P. - Have you seen your Master today?

R. - Yes.

P. - How was he dressed?

R. - With a Yellow Jacket and a Pair of Blue Tights.

N.B.: The Yellow Jacket is the Compass, and the Blue Tights the Steel Points.

P. - How long do you serve your Master?

R. - From Monday morning to Saturday evening.

P. - How do you serve him?

R. - With [the] Chalk, [the] Charcoal and [the] Clay Dish.

P. - What do they mean?

R. - Freedom, Fervour and Zeal.

Ex. - Give me the Sign of Accepted Apprentice.

Resp. - Extending the Four Fingers of the Right Hand and passing them his Throat; this is the Sign, and demands a Touch.

N.B.: A Knock is the joining of the Pad of the Thumb of the Right Hand with the first Knuckle of the Index Finger of the Right Hand of the Brother asking for a Word.

P. - Give me the Word

R. - I will spell it with you

Exam. - BOAZ (N.B.: the Exam. says B, Resp. O, Exam. A, Resp. Z, i.e. Boaz) Give me another one.

Resp. - JAKIN (N.B.: Boaz and Jakin were two Pillars in Solomon's Court. I Kings, ch. VII, verse 21)

P. - How old are you?

R. - Less than Seven.(Indicating that has not passed [to] Master)

P. - What is the Day for?

R. - To See in it.

P. - What is the Night for?

R. - To Hear.

P. - How does the wind blow?

R. - Duly East and West.

P. - What's a Clock?

R. - High Twelve

End of the Accepted Trainee Part

Grade of Fellow of the Craft

P. - Are you a Companion of the Office?

R. - I am.

P. - Why were you made a Companion of the Office?

R. - For the love of the letter G.

P. - What does that G stand for?

R. - Geometry, or the fifth Science.

P. - Have you ever travelled?

R. - Yes, East and West.

P. - Have you worked?

R. - Yes, in the construction of the Temple.

P. - Where did you receive your Salaries?

R. - In the middle chamber.

P. - How did you come to the Middle Chamber?

R. - Through the Atrium.

P. - As you passed through the Atrium, what did you see?

R. - Two large columns.

P. - What are they called?

<R. - J. B., i.e. Jakin and Boaz.

<P. - How tall are they?

<R. - Eighteen Elbows.

<P. - What Circumference?>

<R. - Twelve Elbows.

<P. - What were they decorated with?

<R. - With two capitals.

<P. - How high were the capitals?

<R. - Five Elbows.

<P. - What were they decorated with?

<R. - With Net and Grenades.> <<See I Kings, Ch. 7.>> <<See I Kings, Ch. 7.

P. - How did you come to the Middle Chamber?

R. - By a winding Pair of Stairs ["a winding Pair of Stairs"].

P. - How many [?]

R. - Seven or more.

P. - Why Seven or more?

R. - Because Seven or more make a Just and Perfect Lodge.

P. - When you arrived at the Middle Chamber Gate, what did you see?

R. - A Watchman.

P. - What did he ask of you?

R. - Three Things.

P. - What were they?

R. - A] Sign, [a] Touch, and a Word.

N.B.: The Sign is by placing the Right Hand on the Left Breast, the Touch is by giving your Right Hand to the Person asking for it, pressing with the Pad of your Thumb on the first Knuckle of the Middle Finger, and the Word is Jakin.

P. - How high was the Middle Chamber Door?

R. - So high that a Cowan could not reach a pin.

P. - When you got to the middle, what did you see?

R. - The Image ["Resemblance"] of the Letter G.

P. - Who does that G symbolise?

R. - One who is bigger than you.

P. - Who is greater than I, who am a Free and Accepted Mason, the Master of a Lodge?

R. - The Great Architect and Inventor ["Contriver"] of the Universe, or He who was raised to the pinnacle of the Pinnacle of the Sacred Temple.

P. - Do you know how to recite the letter G?

R. - I will try.

The Recitation of the Letter G
The one who answers. - In the midst of Solomon's Temple stands ["stands"] a G,
A clear Letter for all to read and see,
But few understand what that
letter G means.

The Examiner. - My friend, if you intend to belong to
this Fraternity,
You can immediately and exactly say
what that letter G stands for.

Resp. - By means of the Sciences, Bodies of
various kinds are brought to light,
That appear in perfect Sight;
But none but [the] Men shall know my Thought.

Exam. - The Righteous will.

Ans. - If [they are]

Venerable.

Exam. - Upright and Venerable I am at once,
To ask you ["Hail"] I have Authority,
Let it be made known to me without delay,
So that I may understand you.

Reply - By Letters Four and Science Five
This G rightly remains,
In due Art and Proportion, You
have your Answer, Friend.
N.B.: Four letters are Boaz.10 Fifth Science Geometry.

Exam. - My friend, you answer well,
If the Righteous and Free Principles
discover, I will change your Friend's Name,
And from now on I will call you Brother.

Resp. - The Sciences are well composed Of
Verse of noble Structure,
A Point, A Line, and an Exterior; but
a Solid is the last.

Exam. - May God's good Welcomell be with this our happy Reunion.

Resp. - And to all the Right and Venerable Brethren and Companions.

Exam. - Of the Right, Worshipful and Sacred Lodge of St. John.

Reply - Where I come from.

Exam. - You are saluted, you are saluted, you are saluted three ,
wholeheartedly, yearning for your Name.

Reply - Timothy Ridicule.

Exam. - Welcome, Brother, by the Grace of God.

N.B.: The Reason why they call themselves of the Sacred Lodge of St. John, is,
because he was the Pre-cursor of our Saviour, and laid the first Parallel Line
to the Gospel (others assert, that our Saviour himself was accepted as a
Freemason while in the Flesh) but how ridiculous and profane this seems, I leave
to the consideration of the judicious Readers.

End of the Companion Part of the Craft.

The Master's Degree

P. - Are you a Master Mason?

R. - I am; test me, prove me, refute me if you can.

P. - Where were you pass'd Master?

R. - In a Perfect Lodge of Masters.

P. - What constitutes a Perfect Masters Lodge?

R. - Three.

P. - How did you come to be approved as a Master?

R. - By the help of God, the Squadron and my own Industry.

P. - How were you approved Master?

R. - [Passing] From Square to Compass.

Ex. - I presume you have been an Accepted Apprentice.

R. - I have seen Jakin and Boaz;

I was made a Master Mason [that's the] weirdest thing,

With [the] Diamond, [the] Ashlar and the Square.12

Ex. -If you claim to be a Master Mason, Exactly

you must understand the Rule of Three. And *M. B.

shall set you free: * Macbenah.

And [all] whatsoever you desire in Masonry,

In this Lodge it will be shown to you.

R. - Excellent Masonry [is that which] I understand;

The keys of all Lodges are at my disposal. Ex. - You are

a heroic Companion; where do you come from?

R. - Del Este.

Ex. - Where are you going?

R. - West.

Ex. - What are you going to do there?

R. - To seek what was lost and has now been found.

Ex. - What was lost and has now been found?

R. - The Word of the Master Mason.

Ex. - How did it get lost?

R. - By Three Great Blows, or the Death of our Master Hiram.

Ex. - How did he come to his Death?

R. - At the Building of Solomon's Temple he was a Master Mason, and at 12 o'clock , when the Men had gone to refresh themselves, he came, as it were, to the Temple of Solomon, and at 12 o'clock noon, when the Men had gone to refresh themselves, he came to the Temple of Solomon.

his usual Custom, to inspect the Works, and when he had entered the Temple, there were there Three Ruffians, supposed to be Three Companions of the Office, who had planted themselves at the Three Entrances of the Temple, and when he was going out, one demanded of him the Master's Word, and he answered that he did not receive it in that manner, but that Time and a little Patience would lead him to it: He, not satisfied with that Answer, gave him a Blow,¹³ which made him stagger; he went to the other Gate, where being accosted in the same manner and giving the same Answer, he received a greater Blow, and at the third his Quietus.

Ex. - What did the Ruffians kill him with?

R. - With a Laying Mallet, a Laying Tool, and a Finishing [or: Setting] Mallet.¹⁴

Ex. - How did they dispose of it?

R. - They took him outside by the West Gate of the Temple, and hid him under some Rubble until [it was] 12 O'clock again.

Ex. - What time was that?

R. - 12 o'clock at Night, while the Men were at Rest.

Ex. - How did they dispose of it afterwards?

R. - They transported him to the Crest ["Brow"] of the Hill, where they made a decent Burial and buried him.

Ex. - When was he lost?

R. - Same Day.

Ex. - When was he found?

R. - Fifteen Days Later.

Ex. - Who found him?

R. - Fifteen Loving Brethren, by Order of King Solomon, went out by the West Gate of the Temple, and separated themselves to the Right and Left without exceeding the distance at which they could hear each other when they gave Notice; and they agreed that if they did not find the Word in him or near him, the first Word [uttered] would [thereafter] be the Word of Master; One of the Brethren, more fatigued than the rest, sat down to rest, and grasping a Bush, which fell off easily, and perceiving that the Earth had been removed, He called ["Hail'd"] to his Brethren, and all proceeding on their Search found him decently buried in a wondrous Pit [of] 6 Feet East, 6

West, and 6 Feet [in] Perpendicular, whose Covering was green Moss and Grass, which surprised them; and their answer was, Muscus Domus Dei Gratia, which, according to Masonry, is, Thanks be [given] to God, our Master has attained a House of Moss: Then they covered it thoroughly, and as a further Ornament placed a Sprig of Acacia¹⁵ at the Head of his Sepulchre, and went and gave an Account to King Solomon.

Ex. - What did King Solomon say to all this?

R. - Concerning him he ordered that he should be laid to rest and decently buried, and that 15 Companions of the Craft in white Gloves and Aprons should attend his Funeral (which is obligatory among Masons to this day).

Ex. - How was Hiram lifted up?

R. - As are all other Masons, when they receive the Word of the Master.

Ex. - What is it like?

R. - By the Five Points of Fellowship.¹⁶ Ex.

- What are they?

R. - Hand to Hand, Foot to Foot, Cheek to Cheek, Knee to Knee, and Hand on Back.

N.B.: When Hiram was lifted up, he was seized by the Indices, and the Skin was loosened, which is called the Slip; to hold out the Right Hand and place the Middle Finger on the Wrist, embracing with the Index and Fourth [finger] the Sides of it, is called the Grip ["Gripe"], and the Sign is by placing the Thumb of the Right Hand against the Left Breast, spreading the Fingers.

Ex. - What is a Master Mason called?

R. - Acacia is my Name, and I come from a Just and Perfect Lodge.

Ex. - Where was Hiram buried?

R. - In the Sanctum Sanctorum.

Ex. - How was it introduced?

R. - Through the West Gate of the Temple.

Ex. - What are the Master-Jewels [or "Maestras": "Master-Jewels"]?

R. - The Atrium, the Attic and the Squared Pavement.

P. - Explain them.

R. - The Atrium [is] the Entrance to the Sanctum Sanctorum, the Attic the Windows or Lights of its interior, the Square Pavement the Paving of the Ground.

Ex. - Give me the Master's Word.

R. - It is whispered in the Ear, and held by the Five Points of the Companionship mentioned above, says Macbenah, which means The Builder has been reached ["is smitten"].

N.B.: If any Masons are in their Work, and you harbour a desire to distinguish an Accepted Mason from the rest, take a Piece of Stone and ask him what he smells like, he will immediately answer, neither Copper, nor Iron, nor Steel, but a Mason; then, on being asked how old he is, he will reply, "above seven years," which indicates that he has passed [to] Master.

End of Master's Part.

Justification which the Author makes of himself on account of the wronged Part of Mankind.

Of all the Abuses that have appeared among Mankind, none is so ridiculous as the Mystery of Freemasonry, which has amused the World, and given rise to various Interpretations; Those Pretensions of Secrecy, ineffectual, have been revealed (though not perfectly), and the great Article, namely, the Pledge, has been printed several Times in public Journals, that of the Daily Journal of Saturday, August 22nd, 1730, being entirely authentic, which coincides in its Truth with that given in this Pamphlet; and consequently, when the Pledge of Silence is annulled, the above Secret becomes of no Effect, and must be entirely extinguished.

When some Operative Masons (though according to the polished Mode of Expression, Accepted Masons) made a Visit from the first and oldest Lodge constituted (according to the Book of Lodges in London) to a well known Lodge in this City, they were refused Entrance because their ancient Lodge had removed to another House, which requires, - though contradictorily to this great Mystery - another Constitution, at a Cost of not less than two Guineas, with an elegant Feast, under the Denomination of being devoted to Charitable uses, which if so applied, will receive great Commendations for so worthy a Purpose, but much is doubted of it, and it is more reasonable to think it will be destined to the formation of another System of Masonry, the old Factory being so ruined, that, unless repaired by some occult Mystery, it will soon be annihilated.

I was induced to publish this wonderful Secret for the public Good, at the Request of several Masons, and I hope it will give entire Satisfaction, and that it will

will have its desired Effect by preventing so many gullible People from being dragged into such a pernicious Society.

FINIS.

List of regular lodges by seniority and constitution

1. The King's Arms in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1st and 3rd Monday of each .
Incorporated in 1691.

2. The Rose and the Buffalo against Furnival's Inn at Holborn, 1st Wed. 1712.

3. The Horn Tavern in Westminster, 3rd Friday.

4. The Swan at Hampstead, 1st and 3rd Sat. 17 Jan. 1722.

5. The Three Swans at the Poultry, 2nd Wednesday. July 11, 1721.

6. Tom's Café in Clare-street near Clare-market, 2nd and 4th Thurs. 19 En.
1722.

7. The Cup at Queen-street, Cheapside, 2nd and 4th Tues. 28th Jan. 1722.

8. La Taberna del Diablo in Temple-bar, 2nd Thursday. April 25, 1722.

9. The Barrel at Noble-street, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays. May 1722.

10. The Lion and Shield in Brewer-street, last Tues. 25 Nov. 1722.

11. Queen's head at Knaves-acre, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays. 27 Feb. 1722- 3.

12. Los Tres Toneles in Swithin's-alley, 1st Thursday. 27 Mar. 1723.

13. The Ancora in Dutchy-lane, 2nd Friday and last Monday. 28th Mar. 1723.

14. The Queen's head in Great Queen-street, 1st and 3rd Mondays. 27 Mar.
1723.

15. Bull's head at Southwark, 2nd Monday. 1 April 1723.

16. The Red Lion at Tottenham-court Road, 3rd Monday. 3rd April 1723.

17. The Buffalo and the Harness at Bloomsbury, 1st. and 2nd. Monday, 1723.
18. The Crown and Cushion at Ludgate-hill, 1st Wed. 12 June 1723.
19. The Green Dragon at Snow-hill, 1st and 3rd Mondays, 1723.
20. The Dolphin in Tower-street, 3rd Wednesday. 12 June 1723.
21. Pony's head in Prince-street, Drury-lane, 2nd and last Tues. 4 Aug. 1723.
22. The Ship on Fish-street hill, 1st Friday. Sept. 11, 1724.
23. The Crescent at Cheapside, 2nd and 3rd Tues. 11 Sept. 1723.
24. The Crown outside Cripplegate, 2nd and 4th Fridays.
25. The Mitre at Greenwich, last Sat. 24 Dec. 1723.
26. The King's Arms in the Strand, 4th Tues. 25 Mar. 1724.
27. The Crown and Sceptre at St. Martin's-lane, 2nd and final Monday. 27 Mar. 1724.
28. The Queen's head in the City of Bath, last Thursday.
29. The Queen's head in the City of Norwich.
30. The Swan in the City of Chichester, 3rd Friday.
31. The Pious Bull in Northgate-street in the City of Chester.
32. The Castle and the Hawk in Watergate-street in the City of Chester, 1st Thursday.
33. Pony's head in Carmarthen, South Wales.
34. East India Arms in Gosport, Hampshire, 2nd Thursday at 3.
35. The Angel in Congleton, Cheshire.
36. The Three Barrels in Wood-street, 1st and 3rd Thurs. July 1724.

37. The Swan at Tottenham High cross, 2nd and 4th Sat. 22 En. 1725.
38. The Swan and the Cup at Finch-lane, 2nd and last Wednesday. Feb. 1725.
39. St. Paul's] head in Ludgate-street, 2nd and 4th Mondays. April 1725.
40. The Vine in Holborn, 1st Mon. 10 May 1725.
41. The head of Henry VIII, in St. Andrew's-street near the Seven Spheres, 4th Monday.
42. The Rose at Mary-la-Bone, 1st Monday in Winter, and 1st and 3rd Mondays Summer. 25 May 1725.
43. The Swan in Grafton-street St. Ann's Soho, 1st. and last Wed. Sept. 1725.
44. The White Stag outside Bishopsgate, 1st Tues. 19 Jan. 1726.
45. The Mountain Cafe in Grosvenor-street near Hanover-square, 1st Wed. 12 En. 1727.
46. The Three Crowns at Stoke Newington, 1st Sat. 9 Aug. 1727.
47. King's head at Salford near Manchester, 1st Monday.
48. The Castle at Holborn, 2nd and last Wed. 31 En. 1727-8.
49. The Three Fleurs de Lis at St. Bernard-street in Madrid, 1st Sunday.
50. The Wool Bale at Warwick, 1st and 3rd Fridays. 22 April 1728.
51. The Bishopsgate Coffee House, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays. 1728.
52. The Rose and Crown in Greek-street Soho, 1st and 3rd Fridays. 1728.
53. The White Lion in Richmond, 1st and 3rd Saturdays at 12 noon.
54. La Corona and the Ancora at Shorts-gardens, 1st and 3rd Thursdays.

55. Queen Elizabeth's head at Pitfield-street in Hoxton, 1st and 3rd Mondays.
56. The Crown at the Corn-market in Oxford, every Thursday. 8 Aug. 1729.
57. The Three Barrels at Scarsborough, 1st Wed. 27 Aug. 1729.
58. The Three Casks at Billingsgate, 2nd and 4th Thurs. 24 Jan. 1730.
59. The King's Arms in Cateton-street, 1st and 3rd Fridays. 24 Jan. 1730.
60. [St. George at Northampton, 1st Sat. 16 En. 1730.
61. Prince William at Charing-cross, 2nd and 4th Mon. 26 Feb. 1730.
62. The Bear at Butcher-row, 1st and 3rd Fridays. 6 Mar. 1730.
63. St. Roch's Hill, near Chichester in Sussex, once a year, i.e. on Tuesday in Easter Week. Under the reign of Julius Caesar.
64. The Red Lion in the City of Canterbury, 1st and 3rd Tues. 3rd April 1730.
65. Dick's Café in Gravel-street in Hatton-garden, last Thursday. 16 April 1730.
66. The Golden Spikes at Hampstead, 2nd and 4th Sat. 28 April 1730.
67. The King's Head in Fleetstreet, 2nd and 4th Fridays. 22 May 1730.
- Translation and notes: J. M. R.

NOTES

1

It is obvious that the Latin phrase does not include "Master", but this is how Prichard translates it.

2

"Real Masons": designates one of the contemporary

groups. 3

Respectively "I Hail it". "I Conceal it". "Hail" also has the old sense of "to belong to" according to some authors; and also a very different one, that of "hail" in an atmospheric storm. Also that of "to pull".

4

"Indented Tarsel.

5

"Trasel Board, Rough Ashler, and Broach'd Thurnel'. = Thurnel may be a corruption of Ornel, or Urnel, which designates a type of soft white building stone; broached means worked with a chisel or reaming axe (The Early Mas Cat. 1963, p. 241).

6

Originally in both documents: Jewels.

7

"or does it lie?

8

It would rather be the mouth itself, with its two jaws, of which the teeth constitute the "Ivory Keys"; the "Trailing Line" can also be the distance to the heart, the traditional symbolic seat of Intelligence.

9

Mould-stone can also mean "prototype stone", as a piece to be reproduced.

10

The four letters are four gammas (G). See R. Guénon, "The Letter G and the Swastika", chap. XVII of Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science. Eudeba, Bs.

11

"God's good greeting be to this? Note the three G's at the beginning of the English phrase, which stand out in the original sound set, and which could be seen as corresponding to three planes or aspects united in the polar situation of the letter G, susceptible of a transposition to the unmanifest by what it symbolises.

12

In A Masons Examination, published without title in 1723, knowledge of the Ashlar Stone, the Diamond and the Square characterise the Companion; that of the Master's Part is indicated by the Sacred Word.

13

Blow: also means blow (of wind).

14

"A Setting Maul, Setting Tool and Setting Beadle".

15

In The Concise Oxford dictionary of English etymology, Oxford University Press, New York 1992, we find, "acacia": 14th c., from Latin and this from Greek *akakía* (which can be translated as "without evil": a-kakos), and "cassia", which is the one that appears here: from Old and Medieval English, naturalised in the 16th c., from Latin and this from Greek *kasíā*, and this from Hebrew *kesi'âh* (shrub resembling cinnamon tree), meaning the feminine *kâsa'*: to remove, and this from Hebrew *kesi'âh* (shrub resembling cinnamon tree). XVI, from Latin and this from Greek *kasíā*, and this from Hebrew *kesi'âh* (shrub resembling cinnamon, meaning the feminine *kâsa'*: to remove, or take off, a covering or sheath). In Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, Springfield, Mas. 1958, where both appear with the cited provenance, "acacia" designates "originally a thorny shrub found in Egypt". From different varieties of the genus are extracted gum arabic and some medicine. According to Bernard J. Jones, the *Acacia vera*, a thorny variety from Egypt, is the true Masonic acacia, distinguished by the shape of the branches and especially the arrangement of its leaves (Freemason's Guide and Compendium, p. 490.). The Ark, the Table and Altar of Burnt Offerings, as well as the table of the Tabernacle, were of acacia (Exodus, 25-27).

16

We translate "Fellowship", not to be confused with the French organisation.

THE SISTERHOOD OF FREE SEAMSTRESSES, 1724

This document was also included, with the preceding commentary, in Early Masonic Catechisms, in a section entitled "Possible Replicas". The interest of The Sisterhood of the Free Seamstresses lies in its date, which proves that women's Lodges were already in existence from the time of the first publication of Anderson's constitutions, i.e. at the same time as the creation of Speculative Freemasonry. In fact, some authors are of the opinion that -As in male Freemasonry, these lodges have a medieval operational history, and some of the ancient catechisms and Masonic documents (Old Charges) make no distinction between male and female, according to some researchers who support the idea of the antiquity of women's lodges. In any case, it is striking that in this defamatory document, both of Freemasonry and of women, not only has needlework been chosen as the mainstay of Masonic initiation, which is traditional (see here "Freemasonry and the art of embroidery", M^a A. Díaz), but also some language and quotes from significant biblical characters, which denotes a modicum of knowledge about the Order. We publish this document with the intention of pointing out the difficulties that Masonic women have had, not only outside but even within Freemasonry. This text, with its macho connotations, is at best ambiguous, and views the female sex in a dualistic manner, with a woman, according to it, being either an "honest and respectable" seamstress or a prostitute; apart from this it could represent a warning of the dangers implicit in a women's lodge, that is, the relationship and business proper to women for what is more superficial than that, when shared, is duplicated. F. G.

THE SISTERHOOD OF FREE SEAMSTRESSES, 1724

This ridiculous comparison between the Brotherhood of Freemasons and the Sisterhood of Free Seamstresses was published in the form of an anonymous letter in Read's Weekly Journal, 25 January 1723/4. It was occasioned, quite possibly, by

the appearance of the catechism The Grand Mystery of Free-Masons Discover'd, the sale of which was announced for the 10 January 1723/4, although, in our opinion (see Introduction, p. 14) it can hardly be considered a rejoinder; it is rather a satire on Freemasonry and women. We are not aware that it has been reprinted again. The reprint we offer here comes from a copy of Read's Weekly Journal in the British Museum. [D. Knoop, G. P. Jones, and D. Hamer.]

LORD, There has been a great uproar, of late, concerning an ancient Fraternity of Men, who call themselves Freemasons. The World is in Discussion as to what is the Cement which so readily and loyally binds them to each other, and what are the great Secrets which they claim to have in their Possession, as distinct from the rest of Mankind.

I wonder if any one has had any News so far of a certain remarkable Sisterhood of Women, famous in all Ages, and whose ways are lost in the remotest antiquity. I mean the Sisterhood of the Free Seamstresses.

If I may take the liberty of reserving to myself the meaning of the Words, without their being liable to be twisted by any Prankster in any Sense he pleases, I will here undertake the task of giving you a brief Explanation of this powerful and nurturing Society, which I think it would be more appropriate to designate by the Name of the Legion Brotherhood.

There was no Sewing, when Eve, the Great Lady (Grandmother), invented the Needle to sew together the Fig Leaves, which concealed her own Nudity and that of her Husband. In the course of Time, her Feminine Descendants succeeded by means of the Art of Sewing in making that which was designed only to cover Nudity, into a true Ornament, and then they began to use not only the Needle, but also the Pin, the Tailor's Punch, the Thread, the Thimble, and many other Instruments, by which the thrifty and industrious Feminine Sisterhood obtained great Profit as well as Renown. However, as in all legitimate Vocations and Professions, there are some persons so greedy and rapacious within the Guild, that they would move Heaven and Earth to satisfy their vicious and voracious Appetite, and this was what happened in this honest and respectable Corporation of Seamstresses. Not content that their skill in Needlework provided them with a decent Livelihood, some of them wanted to add a new Branch to their Craft, a certain Occupation to get some extra Money, which was a great Humiliation for those who detested any kind of destructive Practice even if it could be a source of Emoluments and Profits. This gave rise to Fights and Disputes which, in time, ended up dividing the Sisterhood. Those who were in favour of the new occupation and who united it with the Seamstress Art, separated, and from then on were called the Free Seamstresses.

Its Antiquity. The Sisterhood of the Free Seamstresses states that this Schism occurred at a very Ancient Date, and they say that Delilah was one of the first to give Renown to their Society, when it was in its Infancy. As they pride themselves on having always maintained a plain and fair relationship with the Freemasons, their tradition tells of various and pleasant meetings between this same Delilah and Samson, whom they regarded as Grand Master of this Fraternity; and they boast that in those Days the new occupation was at its Summit, at its highest Level of Glory.

They keep a complete List of their Heroines, as they call them, Susanna would be of that Number, and they attribute to her the Authorship of a certain Apothegm which, being accepted as a primordial Principle by the Sisterhood, became a common Maxim among them, , "Gusta Gustar". They have stories of the Amazons, Sappho, Lais, the Papisa Joanna, Queen Christina, all of them accepted Free Seamstresses; and they acknowledge that a large Number of cloistered Nuns from all parts of the world are secretly admitted into their Sisterhood.

Their Religion. As to their Religion, they are, at present, good Catholics, and for various reasons profess great affection for the Holy See of Rome: because that Religion leaves the people in a State of Nature, because one of the Sisters once had the honour of occupying the Papal Chair, and because His Holiness protects and exhorts their profession. They say that the entire College of Cardinals speaks well of them, that both Regular and Secular Clergy receive their Confessions, and that they are granted plenary Indulgences free of charge. All this is thanks to their ingenuity and docility.

Their Politics. In this realm they identify themselves wholly with the Doctrine of Passive Obedience and Non-resistance, though they detest and abhor the true Name, as well as a Pretender.

Their Knowledge. They might well be called Philosophic-Maths, being as they are Lovers of Mathematics, and Desirous as they are of it. They are incredibly well versed in Tactics. Even Phidias would find it difficult to surpass the Statuary of many of the Sisters, for they work for Life. They have a deep bond with the Freemasons, and with all those workers of Stone, some of them having boasted that never would the Fraternity of Freemasons have erected so many Buildings, if the Sisterhood of the Seamstresses had not undertaken to Supply and Populate them.

Their Principles. They hold that each Sister must keep only her own secrets; that their Lodge is wherever it is convenient; that the words meum and tuum are destructive to the Society of Free Seamstresses; that a Community of Goods is their primum mobile, just as the salus populi is the lex suprema in the State; that those who earn Gold may wear it; that Women were made for Men; and finally, that their dernier resort,* their greatest Power and Strength, lies in their Hindquarters.

Their Mode of Action. As the Needle has long since become the most insignificant Tool for the Free Seamstresses, the Sisterhood have generously substituted it for their Flatteries and Seductions, and a thousand other Strategic Inventions and Intrigues; so that they may be said to surpass even Farrar himself in Ways and Means.

Their Admission. They admit into their Sisterhood all who know the Preeminence of the following two Words, which are to them Kabalah or Bewitchment: Inopportunity and Opportunity.

Their Sports. They are Passionate Lovers of a Game called Laughing and Lying, which, being a laborious Pastime, and accompanied with a great Waste of Liquor, makes them generally a short-lived Race; and, excepting one or , putrefaction comes to them sooner than death. Translation: Gloria Roca

NOTE

*

Sic in original (N. ed.)

THE ORIGIN OF SPECULATIVE FREEMASONRY

DOUGLAS KNOOP

Method of approach. The first Masonic ceremonies. Circumstances in Scotland, England and Ireland. Nature of the changes: 1, History and Duties; 2, the Duty for new Brethren; 3, the Installation ceremony; 4, the removal of grimaces; 5, drawing the lodge; 6, the opening prayer; 7, the three degree system. The place of the changes. Places and dates of these. The authors of the changes. Conclusion.

Method of approach. In this article,¹ no attempt is made to discuss the origin of Freemasonry: I take it for granted that it will not deal with the customs and practices of operative Masons. Nor have I any new facts to present to the Brethren; the most I can claim is to approach the established facts from a somewhat different angle than is customary. It has been the custom to treat the history of Freemasonry in England, Scotland and Ireland by separate developments in each country; but I am convinced that these developments cannot be fully or correctly understood in isolation. It is indeed convenient and desirable to have the different accounts of the rise and expansion of the local and central Masonic organisation in each country; but it is necessary to guard against the error of thinking that in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, when accepted or speculative Masonry was developing out of the operative institutions, an entirely independent process was going on in each of the three kingdoms. If this had been the case, we would have had not one, but three systems of speculative Masonry. It is necessary, , to consider as a whole the evolution of the Masonic mode of working in that period, and to co-ordinate the uncertain facts, irrespective of whether they concern in the first instance England, Scotland or Ireland.

THE FIRST MASONIC CEREMONIES

In my "Prestonian Lecture" on the "Mason Word",² in my "Pure Ancient Masonry" (Ars Quatuor Coronatorum, lIII), and in A Short History of Freemasonry to 1730 (in collaboration with G. P. Jones) I have briefly discussed the evidence available regarding early Masonic ceremonies. Here, therefore, I need only summarise that information: a) In England, certainly as early as 1560, a version of the manuscript Constitutions of Masonry was read to the candidate, who had to take an oath to keep the Duties. As the latter were addressed to the Masters and Companions, I presume that the candidate was admitted to the Fraternity as a Companion or member of the Company of Masons. b) In Scotland, certainly from 1598, the Sacred Word, with all that it implied, was communicated to candidates in two ceremonies. By the first the candidate was admitted as an accepted apprentice, after having served for seven years as an apprentice mason; by the second he was admitted as a Fellow, after having served for a period as an accepted apprentice. c) In Scotland, beginning with the first ceremony, the candidate was admitted as a Fellow, after having served for a period as an accepted apprentice.

in the second half of the seventeenth century, a version of the Ms. Constitutions of Masonry, copied directly or indirectly from some English original, was read to the candidate, at the same time as the secrets of the accepted apprentice bound up with the Sacred Word were communicated to him. d) In Scotland, where as early as 1600 non-operative Masons or Gentlemen were admitted into operative lodges, it was not uncommon for the two ceremonies of admission to be combined for the benefit of several candidates, who might thus be received as accepted apprentices and as fellows on one and the same occasion. e) There is no evidence, so far as I have been able to ascertain, that the English operatives made use of secret modes of recognition, and there is even some ground for thinking that no such system, similar to the Scottish institution of the Sacred Word, generally existed in this country. It is possible, however, that the Scottish Sacred Word was in use among operatives in the far north of England. f) There is evidence to suggest that, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, non-operative or speculative English Masons, meeting in lodges of Accepted Masons, made use of signs and tokens, and other methods of recognition, which would probably be the same as those connected in Scotland with the Sacred Word. g) the General and Singular Duties of the Ms. Constitutions of Masonry contained various moral precepts, together with numerous regulations of the profession, but it does not appear that they were intended to veil morality in allegory, or to illustrate it by symbols. Moreover, all available information concerning the phrases and practices connected with the communication of the Sacred Word suggests that, apart from the morality implied by the sacredness and inviolability of an oath, the Sacred Word was not concerned with morality, and that symbolism played little or no part in any ceremony connected with it.

CIRCUMSTANCES IN SCOTLAND, ENGLAND AND IRELAND

The main object of this essay is to consider the early steps by which the somewhat confused history of the building industry, the regulations of the Craft, and the moral precepts of the Ms. Constitutions of Masonry, together with the sometimes crude usages and phrases associated with the communication of the Sacred Word, were finally so modified and elaborated as justify the assertion that Freemasonry is a peculiar system of morals, veiled in allegories and illustrated by symbols. To form an opinion as to when and where the fundamental changes were introduced into Masonic practices which were to transform the whole character of the ceremonies, the circumstances prevailing in England, Scotland and Ireland at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries must be briefly examined. We may begin with Scotland, for it is apparently from this country that accepted or speculative Freemasonry derived the foundations upon which the speculative superstructure would eventually be erected.

Scotland. The authority of each particular lodge, apart from some limitations imposed by the existence of a local corporation of building, was subject in some cases to the supervision of a more important neighbouring lodge, and in all to the central control exercised by a royal officer known as the Warden General and Principal Master Builder. Although non-operative members may have outnumbered operative members, as was the case in Aberdeen Lodge in 1670, it does not appear, however, that they were in a material position to transform the character of the practices connected with the communication of the Sacred Word, which was a widespread operative institution in the country. It may be that in the course of the years the Word was modified, and additions were made to it, although it would be impossible to say for certain that this was the case.

would have been the result of a non-operative influence, but both modifications and additions, so far as one can tell, did not fundamentally alter the character of the practices. The fact that when Dr. Desaguliers, the English Grand Master, visited the operative lodge at Edinburgh in 1721 he was found "duly qualified in all points of Masonry" and received as a brother strongly suggests that the old practices had been adopted by English Accepted Masons, and that, at least until that year, they had been subject to but minor changes.

Murray Lyon, referring to that visit, states that he has "no hesitation in attributing to the meeting which the co-inventor and pioneer of the system had with the Edinburgh lodge in August 1721, the knowledge and subsequent adoption by Scotland of English symbolic Freemasonry". That Scotland somewhat later imported from England its speculative or symbolic Freemasonry is probably true; but to what extent, if so, Desaguliers was responsible for the establishment of that system, and for the introduction of the various changes, is another matter, which we must examine below. Here I may remind the Brethren that it was not until 1736, fifteen years after Desaguliers' visit to Edinburgh Lodge, that the Grand Lodge of Scotland was formed on the English model. As a result, non-operative Freemasonry in that country became subject to a new central control, which, however, was not universally accepted until near the end of the nineteenth century. It is possible, of course, that the English speculative mode of working, as distinct from the English speculative organisation, had been introduced into Scotland before 1736, though I am not aware of any lodge minutes to suggest that this was so. What is more likely is that it was not until after the formation of the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1736, when similar modifications were made to English ceremonies around that date, that these were introduced into Scottish lodges. This probably explains why Scotland did not adopt the ceremony of installation of the Master of the Lodge, abandoned before 1736 by the lodges dependent on the Grand Lodge of England. This ceremony was part of the mode of work of the Grand Lodge of the Ancients, but did not become general practice in England until after the union of the two Grand Lodges in 1813. It was not adopted in Scotland before eighteen hundred and seventy-something. In the light of the evidence we have, it seems virtually certain that the transformation of operative work into speculative work did not originate in Scotland, and it is probably certain that there was little or no Scottish influence on that development.

England. It does not appear that in England in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries non-operative or Gentile Masons were affiliated to operative lodges, as in Scotland; in the memoirs of the old operative lodges of Swalwell and Alnwick there is no trace of the admission of non-operative members before 1732 and 1748 respectively. On the other hand, some Operative Masons were members of Lodges of Accepted, in London, Chester and York; and, according to the New Articles of the Ms. Constitutions versions belonging to the Roberts family,³ at least one Craft man had to be present at the reception of a Freemason.

There is evidence to show that some Craft Masons were also Accepted Masons; but it may be presumed that the ceremony by which they were received as such was different from any other in use for admission to an English Operative Lodge. On the other hand, there is no evidence to suggest that the associations of Accepted Masons were in any respect subject to the control of an organisation of operatives. If any control existed at all, it was exercised by Accepted Masons, both before and after 1717, the year in which the Grand Lodge was established. It follows that Accepted Masons in England, being freer with regard to operative control than those in the United Kingdom, were more subject to the control of an operative than those in the United Kingdom.

Scotland, they had greater power to introduce innovations and elaborate traditional ritual. Moreover, if we were to assume that the essential condition of freedom from operational control had existed before 1717, it would follow that innovations could just as easily have been introduced in 1707, as 1697, or 1727.

Ireland. In considering the situation in Ireland at the same , there is added, to the uncertainty which already exists as to the date or dates of the fundamental changes in Freemasonry, a further uncertainty as to the place or places where those changes originated. The facts we know concerning Freemasonry in pre-1730 Ireland are unfortunately very few; we owe most of them to the researches of Chetwode Crawley in the last decade of the nineteenth century, supplemented by the more recent researches of Bros. Lepper and Crossle. Irish operatives do not appear to have associated in "territorial" lodges as did the Scots; but, from time to time, English Masons worked in Ireland, and may have introduced a knowledge of their usages and practices among the stonemasons of that country, from whom, in due course, Irish gentry may have derived their knowledge of the Craft. Certainly, Br. Lepper emphasises the fact that for some years before 1688, which is when the first trace of a lodge of accepted Masons appears in Trinity College, Dublin, a good deal of building work was in progress in that College. If the non-operative or Accepted Masons in Ireland had belonged to lodges of operatives as in Scotland, it would be reasonable to suppose that it was from these that they had obtained their knowledge of Freemasonry, but in fact they do not appear to have belonged to such lodges. Both the lodge of Freemasons at Trinity College, Dublin, alluded to in the 1688 list, and the one present at Doneraile House in 1712 - assuming that the episode of the Hon. Elizabeth Saint-Leger and the lodge she is supposed to have overheard of is not purely mythical as far as the lodge is concerned - were both, as far as one can tell, lodges of accepted Masons, on the English model. Thus, in view of the close literary, intellectual and social connections between Dublin and England at that period, it seems to me most likely that that adopted or accepted Freemasonry in respect of which Dr. Robert Plot claimed, writing in 1686, to be more or less scattered throughout the nation had come to Ireland in a manner similar to that in which it came to various parts of England. If this was so, it occurred under even less effective control than any that might have existed in England before 1717, thus affording still greater opportunities for the introduction of fundamental changes in the mode of labour.

We now approach the central problem of this article, namely, an investigation into what changes were introduced into Masonic work circa 1700, at least as far as they can be traced, as well as the three closely related problems of when these changes were made, where they were made, and who made them.

NATURE OF THE CHANGES

1. In accordance with the ancient operative practice, the legend or history of the construction, and the duties or regulations governing the Masonic Craft

-as contained in the Ms. Constitutions of Masonry - were read to the candidate, who was to take an oath on the Bible to fulfil the Duties. Three modifications were made to this practice: a) the history of Freemasonry was edited and extensively revised by Anderson in his Constitutions of 1723, in which

b) the duties were "abridged" by Anderson in these Constitutions, the General and Singular Duties of the Ms. Constitutions being replaced by "the Duties of a Freemason", which were to "be read at the reception of New Brethren", presumably in place of the former. c) the old instruction in the Ms. Constitutions of a Freemason was "to be read at the reception of New Brethren", presumably in place of the former. Constitutions by "the Duties of a Freemason", which were to be "read at the reception of New Brethren", presumably in place of them. c) the former instruction in the Ms. Constitutions of Masonry referring to the administration to the candidate of the oath of observance of the duties, was omitted from the Constitutions of 1723.

These Constitutions of Anderson contained an Approbation of the Grand Lodge, and also an Order, signed by the Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master for the publication of the book. However, the question of the confirmation of the General Regulations "so far as they are consistent with the Ancient Laws of Masonry" was raised at the Annual Meeting of the Grand Lodge on 24 June 1723, no doubt for the technical reason that the Approbation and Order for publication had only been passed at Quarterly Session. Whether the former was requested for the Constitutions in general, or for the General Regulations in particular, is not clear from the Grand Lodge minutes. In fact, no confirmation was granted; instead a resolution was passed that "it is not in the power of any person or Group of persons to effect any Alteration or Innovation in the Body of Masonry without first obtaining the consent of the Annual Grand Lodge," a resolution which, it may be observed, claimed for the Grand Lodge wider powers than are now called for. It appears from the proceedings of the Annual Grand Lodge that Anderson's Constitutions did not meet with entire approval even in the Grand Lodge. Anderson's historical version was attacked in the Briscoe pamphlet of 1724, and mocked in An Ode to the Grand Khaibar of 1726, and the author was ridiculed in the writings of the Gormogons. The tension that arose in the Grand Lodge over "The Ancient Laws of Freemasonry" has sometimes been used to infer that it was the Craft Masons who first opposed Anderson's innovations, but the heat with which many Masons of today resist attempts to divert them from established practices or ritual inclines me to think that opposition to Anderson did not necessarily come from them.

2. Within a few years of the publication of Anderson's Constitutions of 1723, a different revision of the duties of the Constitutions of Masonry made its appearance: it is first found in Smith's Pocket Companion for Free-Masons, published in London in December 1734. The Pocket Companion contains what is described as "A Short Duty to be given to new Brethren", which bears no relation to the Apprentice Duty contained in some versions of the Ms. Constitutions which is of a definitely operative character. It coincides in many respects with Anderson's "Duties of a Freemason", but also includes entirely different subjects. In order to show the relationship between the latter, I publish here in full the "Brief Duty for new Brethren", together with parallel passages from Anderson's "Duties of a Freemason".

Duties for new Brothers Duties of
a Freemason

You are now admitted by the unanimous consent of our Lodge, as a Fellow of our most Ancient and Honourable Society; Ancient, because it has subsisted from Time immemorial, and Honourable, because it tends in all its

Particularities to change a Man so that he is no longer but in accordance with its glorious Precepts. The greatest Monarchs of all Ages, both of Asia and Africa and of Europe, have been promoters of the Royal Craft; and many of them have presided over Masons as Grand Masters in their respective Territories, considering that it did not injure their Imperial Dignities to place themselves on the same level as their Brethren in Masonry, nor to act as they did.

The great Architect of the World is our Supreme Master, and the infallible Rule He has given us, is that according to which We Work.

Religious Disputes are never permitted in the Lodge; for as Masons, we follow only the universal Religion, or Religion of Nature. This is the Cement which unites Men of the most different Principles in one sacred Bond, and brings together those who were at the greatest distance from each other. (P. 54.) No private Confrontation or Dispute is to enter the door of the Lodge, much less any Discussion of Religion, Nationalities, or Politics. (P. 50.) A Mason is bound, by his Qualification, to obey the rules of the Lodge. (P. 50.) A Mason is bound, by his Qualification, to obey the rules of the Lodge, and to obey the rules of the Lodge.) A Mason is bound, by his Quality, to obey the moral Law ? for there is no other expedient to bind him but Religion in which all Men are agreed ? by which Masonry becomes the Centre of Union, and the Means of conciliating a true Friendship between Persons who are to remain at a perpetual Distance.

There are three general Great Duties which Masons should always inculcate, namely, towards God, towards our Neighbours, and towards Ourselves. To God, never mentioning His Name except with the Reverential Awe which it befits a creature to profess to his Creator, and always regarding Him as the Sum(m)um Bonum to delight us with which we have come into the World; and according to this View regulate all our Searches.

Towards our neighbours, by acting according to the Squadron, or by acting as we would like them to act towards us.

To , avoiding all Intemperance and Excesses, by which we might become incapable of continuing our Work, or be led into a Conduct unworthy of our laudable Profession; keeping ourselves always within due Bounds, and free from all Corruption.

(P. 54.) They may delight in innocent Joy, treating one another according to their Capacity, but avoiding Excess.

In the State, a MASON must conduct himself as a peaceful and respectful subject, willingly conforming to the Government under which he lives.

(P. 50.) A Mason is a peaceful subject of the Civil Powers, wherever he resides or works.

He owes his Superiors a just Deference, and from his Inferiors he rather receive Honour with some Reluctance, than seek it by Force.

(P. 52.) These Rules and Regulations, supreme and subordinate,? are to be obeyed in the respective Posts? with all Humility, Reverence, Love, Alacrity.

He must be a Man of Benevolence and Charity, who does not take a contented seat while his Fellowmen, but much more his Brothers, are in Need, when it is in his Power (without injury to himself or his Family) to help them.

(Q. 55.) If you find that he is a true and genuine Brother, you must respect him accordingly; and if he is in need, you must succour him if you can, ? But you are not obliged to go beyond your Capacity.

In the Lodge, it must remain with all due Decorum, lest, by any lack of it, Beauty and Harmony should be disturbed or broken.

He is to be obedient to the Master and presiding Officers, and to apply himself closely to the Affairs of Masonry, that he may soon become an Expert in them, both to his own Credit, and to that of the Lodge.

(P. 53.) You are not to constitute private Meetings, or hold separate Conversations, before leaving the Master's, nor to speak of anything impertinent or out of , nor to interrupt the Master or the Wardens, or any Brother who is addressing the Master: Nor conduct yourselves in a ridiculous or laughable manner while the Lodge is engaged in that which is serious and solemn; nor use any inconvenient Language under any Pretext; but pay due Reverence to your Master, Wardens, and Companions, and regard them with due veneration.

He must not neglect his necessary occupations on account of Masonry, nor engage in Disputes with those who through Ignorance may speak ill of it, or ridicule it.

He should be a Lover of Arts and Sciences, and take every Opportunity to perfect himself in them.

If he recommends a Friend to become a Mason, he should see to it that [he] is such as he thinks he ought to be in order to conform to the above obligations, by his Misconduct the Lodge should suffer at any Time an Accusation. Nothing can cause more displeasure to all faithful Masons, than to see any of their Brethren profane or transgress the sacred Laws of their Order, and come to wish they had never admitted him.

3. A Postscript to the Constitutions of 1723 contains the manner of constituting a new lodge, including the installation of the new Master. As far as I know, it is the earliest reference to it, and it is possible that this double ceremony, which is described in some detail, represented a considerable elaboration of an existing practice, and it may also have been

completely new. As this is the only official report we possess of a Masonic ceremony as it was practised in the year 1722, I publish it in its entirety, with the italics and capitals of the original.

A New Lodge, in order to avoid various Irregularities, must be solemnly constituted by the Grand Master, accompanied by his Deputy and Wardens; or, in the Absence of the Grand Master, the Deputy shall act by Mercy of the Grand Master, and shall appoint some Master of Lodge to assist him; or in case the Deputy is absent, the Grand Master shall call some Master of Lodge to act as Deputy pro tempore.

If the Candidates, the new Master and the Watchers, are still Companions, the Grand-Master must inquire of his Deputy whether he has examined them, and whether he has found the Candidate Master to be well experienced in the noble Science and royal Art, and duly instructed in our Mysteries, etc.

And the Deputy answering in the affirmative, shall (by order of the Grand Master) take the Candidate from among his Companions, and present him to the Grand Master; saying, Most Worshipful Grand Master, the Brethren here present desire to be constituted into a new Lodge; and I present this my worthy Brother to be their Master, whom I know to be of good Morals and great Experience, genuine and trustworthy, and a lover of the whole Fraternity, wherever it may be scattered over the Face of the Earth.

Then the GRAND-MASTER, placing the Candidate at his left Hand, having required and obtained the unanimous Consent of all the Brethren, will say: I constitute and conform these good Brethren into a new Lodge, and appoint you their Master, not doubting your Ability and Care to preserve the Cement of the Lodge, etc. with some other Expressions which are proper and usual for this Occasion, but which are not to be written.

The Deputy will then recite the Duties of a Master, and the Grand-Master will interrogate the Candidate, saying, Will you submit to these Duties, as the Masters have done in all Ages? And the CANDIDATE expressing his cordial Submission to them, the Grand-Master, by certain significant Ceremonies and ancient Usages, shall install him, and present him with the Constitutions, the Lodge Book, and the Instruments of his Craft, not all together, but one after another; and after each of these, the Grand-Master, or his Deputy, shall recite the brief and essential Duty that suits the thing delivered.

, the Members of this new Lodge, bowing at the same time to the Grand-Master, will give him their Respectful Thanks, and immediately do their Homage to their new Master, expressing their Pledge of Subjection and Obedience to him by the customary Congratulation.

The Deputy and Grand-Watchers, and any other Brethren present, who are not Members of this new Lodge, shall next congratulate the new Master; and he shall express his Acknowledgment first to the GRAND-MASTER, and then to the rest in his Order.

The Grand Master will then ask the new Master to commence immediately the Exercise of his Craft, by choosing his Wardens: And the NEW MASTER calling two Companions, shall present them to the Grand-Master for his Approbation, and to the new Lodge for their Consent. And this having been granted,

The first or second GRAND WATCHMAN, or some Brother for him, will recite the Duties of the Watchers; and the Candidates being solemnly questioned by the new Master, will express their Submission to them.

Whereupon the NEW MASTER, presenting them with the Instruments of his Office, will install them, in due Form, in their respective Posts; and the Brethren of this new Lodge will manifest their Obedience to the new Wardens by the usual Congratulation.

This description of the Installation Ceremony contains the earliest allusion that I know of to "the Duties of a Master" (possibly the prototype of the Duties now printed at the beginning of the Book of Constitutions), to "the Duties of the Watchers" (possibly the prototype of what is now called Of the Watchers), and to the "brief and essential Duty which is appropriate to each thing shown," which accompanied the presentation of each of the tools of the trade (possibly a precursor to the practice of philosophising about the tools when they are presented to the Candidates).

4. The general impression left on the reader's mind by Anderson's description of the Installation Ceremony is one of dignity in the proceedings, something very different from the ceremonies described in the early Masonic catechisms, with their "thousand ridiculous postures and grimaces" to frighten the candidate.⁴ The effort to eliminate them and maintain dignity in the proceedings was probably one of the changes introduced by the newly formed Grand Lodge, and is reflected in one of the regulations adopted (on the recommendation of Dr. Desaguliers) by the lodge constituted at the Maid's Head, Norwich, in May 1724, which reads, "Let no ridiculous jest be played upon any one when admitted."

5. A newspaper advertisement of 1726, quoted by Henry Sadler, refers to the "innovations" lately introduced "by the Doctor [probably Desaguliers] and some other of the Moderns", which seem to have consisted mainly in the substitution of the old method of "lodge drawing" with chalk and charcoal for a system with tape and nails, which in turn was supplanted by the floor cloth and the lodge square.

6. An early example of the modification of Masonic ritual is provided by "A Prayer to be said at the opening of a Lodge, or at the constitution of a Brother", printed in Pennell's Constitutions, published in Dublin in 1730, a prayer not found in Anderson's Constitutions of 1723, although these were closely followed by Pennell in other respects. In order to show the evolution in ritual, I include Pennell's Prayer alongside "A Prayer before the Tenure" included in the Masonic Charter of Aberdeen Lodge, 1670.

Pennell's Constitutions, 1730
Aberdeen Manuscript of 1670

LORD GOD, the Most Holy and Glorious, thou great Architect of Heaven and Earth, who art the Giver of every good Gift and Grace; and who hast promised that when two or three were gathered together in thy Name, thou shouldst be in the midst of them; in Thy Name we are gathered together, we most humbly beseech Thee to bless us in all our Enterprises, to give us Thy Holy Spirit, that He may enlighten our Minds with Wisdom and Intelligence, that we may know Thee, and serve Thee aright, that all we do may be for Thy Glory, and for the Salvation of our Souls.

To be added to a
Reception...:

And we ask Thee, O LORD GOD, to bless our present Enterprise and grant that this, our new Brother, may dedicate his Life to Thy Service, and be a true and faithful Brother among us, and invest him with Divine Wisdom, that he may be, with the secrets of Freemasonry, able to access the Divine and Christian Mysteries.

We humbly beseech you in the Name and for the sake of JESUS CHRIST our LORD and SAVIOR.

AMEN

The: Power of the heavenly father with the wisdom of the glorious son, and the grace and goodness of the holy spirit who are three persons in one god, be with us in our beginning and give us grace to lead us so that we may live in that bliss which will never end: Amen:

7. Another issue on which Pennell did not follow Anderson raises an even more interesting point, , the introduction of the three-degree system. The difference in the wording of the first paragraph of the Fourth Duty of a Freemason, entitled "Of Masters, Wardens, Companions and Apprentices," is very suggestive. I publish the relevant passages from Pennell and Anderson side by side.

Pennell's Constitutions, 1730
Anderson's Constitutions, 1723

And no Master shall take an Apprentice unless he has sufficient Employment for him, and unless he be a perfect Young Man, who has no Cripple or Defect in his Body, which would render him incapable of learning the Craft, of serving his Lord, of being made a Brother, and a Fellow of the Craft, and in due time a Master; and that once qualified he may attain the Honour of being a Warden, and then Master of a Lodge?

That no Master should take an Apprentice, unless he has sufficient employment for him, and unless he be a perfect Young Man, having no Cripple or Defect in his Body, that may render him incapable of learning the Craft, or of serving his Master's Lord, and of being made a Brother, and then a Fellow of the Craft in due time, though he have served for a Term of Years according to the Custom of the Country; And he must be descended from honest Parents; that thus, when otherwise qualified, he may attain to the Honour of being the WATCHMAN, and then the Master of the Lodge?

Were it not for the comma, Pennell's phrase: "made a Brother, and a Fellow of the Craft," might imply that "Brother" and "Fellow of the Craft" were one and the same as "Brother".

one and the same thing. However, this possible interpretation is eliminated by the following paragraph, which reads:

No Brother may be a Master, Warden or Deacon of a Lodge until he has passed the Companion Part of the Craft:

which clearly shows that Pennell considered "a Brother" and "a Fellow of the Craft" as two distinct categories. It follows, then, that Pennell had in mind three degrees, namely those of 1) Brother (= Accepted Apprentice), 2) Fellow of the Craft and 3) Master, whereas Anderson refers only to the two degrees of Scottish operative practice, i.e. 1) Brother (= Accepted Apprentice) and 2) Fellow of the Craft. This suggests the possibility that between the publication of Anderson's Constitutions in 1723 and Pennell's edition of 1730 a change had been introduced, and at the same time that this change originated in Ireland, both of which I shall address more fully below.

THE PLACE OF CHANGE

Having attempted to show that England and Ireland offered greater opportunities than Scotland for a fundamental transformation of operative into speculative Freemasonry, I must now examine more closely the information available to us on what might be called the Masonic atmosphere in those countries. It may thus be possible to determine what kind of changes, if any, might be expected to take place in each. For this analysis, I draw extensively on the pioneering work of Henry Sadler and Chetwode Crawley.

In England, Accepted or Speculative Freemasonry from 1717 onwards seems to have developed as a relatively prosperous, if not aristocratic, institution, which gave greater weight to sociability and banqueting than to ceremonial work. The tension that appeared on the occasion of the Annual Feast, when the General Regulations of the Grand Lodge, and Lawrence Dermott's allegation, that "about the year 1717 some merry comrades who had obtained the degree of a Craft (though very mouldy) resolved to form a Lodge for themselves", may perhaps be taken as indications of these tendencies. If the above assessment is correct, in the early days after 1717 the particular lodges under the Grand Lodge were probably little more than convivial societies. Two indications of their neglect of ceremonies are provided by the difficulty, mentioned by Dr. William Stukeley, of finding sufficient members to perform the ceremony in 1721, when he was made a Mason, and the undoubted fact that the lodges under the first Grand Lodge very soon ceased to perform the ceremony of installation of the Master, if they ever did so. Two of the changes we have previously enumerated, namely, the attempt to do away with grimaces and the substitution of tape and nails for the ancient practice of drawing the lodge with chalk and charcoal, would seem to accord with what is known about the development of Masonry under the first Grand Lodge. The presence of an aristocratic and wealthy element would tend to develop a certain formality and dignity in the proceedings; the use of chalk and charcoal to draw the lodge, and its subsequent erasure with bucket and scouring pad by the last accepted apprentice, would cease to be appropriate when the floor of the lodge room was no longer of stone, but was covered with carpet, as was probably the case in the more prosperous lodges.

In Ireland in the early eighteenth century, Freemasonry seems to have been a less aristocratic institution than in England, with more importance being attached to work and the universality of the Craft, and less to the refreshment and social standing of the members. It might be correct to say that

there was more intellectual interest in Freemasonry in Ireland than in England under the first Grand Lodge. It is certainly remarkable that the two replies to *The Grand Mystery of Free-Masonry Discovered* (London, 1724), one in the form of a satire, *A Letter from the Grand Mistress of the Female Free-Masons* (Dublin, 1724), and the other in the form of a defence, *The Free-Masons Vindication*, both emanated from Ireland. All the evidence at hand points to Irish Masons, and those Masons in England belonging to lodges subject to the Grand Lodge of the Ancients, closely linked with Irish Masonry, as staunch defenders of long-established Masonic practices and strong opponents of changes and innovations in ritual.

Until 1730, or even somewhat later, English and Irish Freemasonry seem to have been virtually identical. In 1725-26 Sir Thomas Prendergast, Bart. was both Second Grand Warden of England and First Grand Warden of Ireland; other prominent Irish Masons, such as the Hon. James O'Brien and Springett Penn, Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Munster in 1726-27 and 1727-28, were members of London lodges; Lord Kingston, a distinguished Irish Mason, was Grand Master of England in 1729 and Grand Master of Ireland in 1730. This year also saw the publication in Dublin of Pennell's *Constitutions of the Free-Masons*, which closely followed Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1723. After 1730 the situation is less clear. In 1735 an Irish edition of Smith's *Pocket Companion for Free-Masons* (published in London in 1734) appeared in Dublin, which even contained an approbation of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, which seems to imply that English and Irish Freemasonry were largely the same even in 1735. However, some 1730 minutes of the first Grand Lodge lend themselves, such as they are, to the interpretation that some changes were made in that year, although when these were annulled, and the old practices restored, in 1809, the Grand Lodge minutes refer to changes introduced in or about 1739. Thus the exact date of the innovations which finally led to the severance of relations for a long period between the first Grand Lodge and the Grand Lodge of Ireland remains uncertain, but we are probably not wrong in stating that those changes originated in the decade 1730-40. Particular changes, however, are outside the scope of this article.

In the light of what I have called the Masonic atmosphere of England and Ireland at the beginning of the eighteenth century, we must now ask where the various changes of which there are traces in the evolution of operative into speculative Masonry originated. Of the seven changes outlined above, three, so far as can be deduced, appear definitely connected with the first Grand Lodge of London, : the revision of the *History and Duties*, as published in Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1723; the substitution with tape and nails of the old method of tracing the lodge with chalk and charcoal; and the attempt to enhance the dignity of the proceedings by the elimination of the jest. It may be noted that none of these changes have to do directly with ritual, in the observance of which the first Grand Lodge and its subordinate lodges were apparently somewhat lukewarm, and to the unaltered preservation of which Irish Freemasonry attached such great importance. The other four changes or elaborations concern very definitely the ritual. In spite of that, they were undoubtedly accepted by the Grand Lodge of Ireland, and in three of the four cases there is even reason to think that they may possibly have originated in this country.

The new Opening Prayer was first published, so far as is known, in John Pennell's *Constitutions* of 1730, and certainly this suggests that it originated in Ireland. The Duty for new Brothers, so far as I am aware, was in Smith's London edition of *A Pocket Companion*

for Free-Masons, published in December 1734, but the Irish edition of the following spring contains an Approbation of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, which immediately follows the Particular Duty, and might be regarded as more especially devoted to it. In addition, it has been argued that William Smith was an Irish Mason, and it is also claimed that he was possibly the writer of the Duties in question. If both hypotheses are correct, the Irish origin of the Duty to the new Brethren is clearly indicated. The earliest known reference to three distinct degrees in Freemasonry, each with its own secrets, was found in Ms. Trinity College, Dublin, 1711, a document forming part of the collection of papers of Sir Thomas Molyneux (1661-1733), a famous doctor and scientist of that city, who, in the opinion of Dr. J. Gilbert Smyly, librarian of Trinity College, may possibly have written it. Thus, unless some evidence to the contrary appears, it would seem that we have a prima facie case that we should attribute the development of the three-degree system to the Irish Masons. The remaining innovation, according to comparison with operational practice - the ceremony of constituting a new lodge and installing the master of a lodge - was first described in Anderson's Constitutions of 1723, so it would not be illogical to attribute its origin to Masons connected with the first Grand Lodge, if not to Anderson himself.

Thus, for the moment, we are faced with the somewhat surprising conclusion that Irish Masons, who abhorred innovation, were possibly responsible for three major changes in ritual, and that English Masons associated with the first Grand Lodge, who sought the reduction and simplification of Masonic ceremonies, were probably responsible for a new and elaborate ceremony. These tentative conclusions are totally incompatible with the views of Henry Sadler and Chetwode Crawley as well as with the character of eighteenth century English and Irish Freemasonry. If we accept their assessments, and I have no basis on which to refute them, we must re-examine the situation with regard to the origin of these particular changes to see if we cannot at least find explanations which are more in harmony with the proven character of contemporary English and Irish Freemasonry. In seeking such explanations, the question immediately arises as to the dates on which these changes were introduced. The problem of where they were first made is inextricably mixed up with that of when, and I suggest examining both at once.

PLACES AND DATES OF CHANGES

The Installation Ceremony. Anderson states in his Constitutions of 1723 that the Manner of Constituting a New Lodge, including the installation of the Master, is "in accordance with the ancient usages of Masons," a statement which was received with considerable doubt; Vibert, for example, refers to the "inevitable cliché ? which here is even more inappropriate than recurrent." To do justice to Anderson it must be remembered that Kilwinning Lodge had undoubtedly constituted branch lodges in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, so it is always possible that there had been 'ancient usages' associated with similar practices there. However, it is to the ceremony of installation of the Master of a lodge that I wish to refer more particularly, for the installations of new Masters must have been more frequent than the constitutions of new lodges. If Anderson and his friends, such as Dr. Desaguliers and George Payne, had been responsible for the creation of the new ceremony, it would be unlikely that it would have been abandoned so soon by the lodges subordinate to the first Grand Lodge. But it would be even less likely that Laurence Dermott and the Grand Lodge of the Ancients, who prided themselves on their adherence to long-established usages, would be

They were not so enthusiastic about a ceremony invented by those whom they contemptuously designated as the Moderns. Doubtless they adopted it because it was approved by the Grand Lodge of Ireland, which, having been instituted within two years of the publication of Anderson's Constitutions of 1723, would hardly have been deceived by Anderson's assertion of "ancient usages," unless it had reason to believe that the ceremony had existed before Anderson's time.

Concerning the "brief and essential duty" with which the presentation of each of the tools of the Master's office was accompanied, it is not impossible that the practice of philosophising on the Mason's working tools had been introduced at an earlier date by accepted Freemasons, for the use of tools by Freemasons is referred to by Randle Holme III^o in a well-known passage in his *Academie of Armory* published in 1688: "I cannot but venerate the Confraternity of Freemasons, on account of their antiquity, and the more so being a member of this society called Freemasons; in dealing with them I have observed the use of several tools which I quote,⁵ some of which I have seen carried on coats of arms." Unfortunately he does not explain 'the use' that the Freemasons made of the 'tools'.

Anderson's expression "according to the ancient usages of Masons" need not necessarily imply "from operatives"; the practice could have originated among the accepted Masons of the seventeenth century and yet it would not be dishonest to describe it as "according to ancient usages".

The Duty for new Brethren. The clear and close relations between this Duty, as published in the *Pocket Companion*, and Anderson's Duties of a Freemason have already been pointed out. If such a Duty were based on Anderson, it could not have been developed until after 1723, and in that case Irish Masons would have accepted it despite such a recent origin. However, there is nothing to prove positively that this Duty was based on Anderson's; it seems to me equally possible that it was Anderson who had this before him when he was preparing his Duties of a Freemason. In support of this consideration, attention might be drawn to the fact that the Duty for new Brethren begins: "You are now admitted by unanimous consent of our Lodge, as a Companion of our Ancient and Venerable Society," a statement which would no doubt have been true in a lodge of seventeenth century Accepted Masons, who as far as one can tell appear to have admitted candidates directly as Companions, but which would not correspond to the practice implied in the works of Anderson or Pennell, according to which candidates were received on their first admission as Apprentices (Accepted).

The Opening Prayer. Although there are no traces of the extended form of Opening Prayer before 1730, when it was published in Pennell's Constitutions, it does not necessarily follow that its composition was recent. It may well have existed when Anderson was preparing his Constitutions, but Anderson, as a Scottish religious, may not have wished to publish the prayer in full. In view of its distinctly Christian character, it seems likely that this prayer was composed at a time when Freemasonry still had a Trinitarian basis. It would be difficult to understand how the expanded form of the Opening Prayer could have been written as part of the ritual once Anderson's first Obedience, "Concerning God and Religion," which substituted Christianity for Theism, had appeared, or once Pennell's revision of that Obedience, which made Freemasonry entirely non-sectarian, had been prepared. Assuming that it probably had its origin before 1723, I see no reason why we should not owe it to a

Mason or Freemasons of the late seventeenth century, a period when, according to Plot, the custom of admitting people into the Society of Freemasons was more or less widespread throughout the nation.

The Three Degree System. Although there are no traces of the three-degree system, as a complete scheme in three separate ceremonies, before 1725 or 1730, there may be little doubt that the preliminary changes, by which the esoteric knowledge originally divided between two categories of operative Masons became divided into three categories of accepted Masons, took place at an earlier date. That this had already occurred in 1711 may be inferred from the following passage from Ms. Trinity College, Dublin:

The sign of the masters is spine, the word Matchpin. The sign of the Fellow Craftsman is knuckles and hollowness [between them], the word Jackquin. The sign of the Accepted Apprentice is hollowness, the word is Boaz or his hollow. Press the Master close to the spine, put your knee between his, and say Matchpin. Press the fellow-apprentice on [the] knuckles, and [in the] hollow, and say Jackquin; press the Accepted Apprentice in [the] hollow and say Boaz, or his hollow.

Ms. Trinity College, Dublin, appears to have been the aide mémoire of a Freemason, and the passage quoted gives the impression of being an attempt to put into writing information that had previously been transmitted orally, probably through a long chain of accepted Masons. If this impression is correct, the tripartite division of esoteric knowledge may be considerably earlier than 1711, however it must be stressed that this division does not necessarily imply three ceremonies: there is no reason why three sets of secrets could not have been communicated to an Accepted Mason on his admission, just as in Scotland Gentlemen Masons were admitted as Accepted Apprentices and Companions of the Craft on one and the same occasion.

Our immediate problem is to consider whether this threefold division of Masonic esoteric knowledge, introduced by Accepted Masons in place of the division into two practised by the operative Masons of Scotland, originated in Ireland at some date prior to 1711, or whether it arose among the Accepted Masons of England at an even earlier date, being transmitted from England to Ireland either when Accepted Masonry was first introduced in Dublin before 1688, or when it was reintroduced before 1711, supposing it to have died out after that year. Unless the Irish Accepted Masons of circa 1700 were very different in their attitude to Masonic customs from their successors of circa 1725, it seems to me highly implausible that Irish Masons originated the threefold division of esoteric knowledge; I am inclined to think, therefore, that it was introduced into Ireland from England. Judging by Plot, the decade 1680-89 was an active period in accepted Freemasonry, whereas there are no such indications regarding the first decade of the eighteenth century. The probabilities, therefore, seem to be in favour of the ternary division of Masonic secrets having originated with English Accepted Masons in the late seventeenth century, rather than in the early eighteenth.

THE AUTHORS OF THE CHANGES

Our final problem is to consider who first made the changes we have detected. As mentioned above, Murray Lyon has described Desaguliers as "the co-inventor and pioneer of the system" of Symbolic Freemasonry, presumably giving Dr. James Anderson the remaining leadership role. This pronouncement, however, seems to me to

contrary to the weight of evidence available to us, which points to the fact that the evolution of operative Masonry into speculative Masonry was a gradual process, and not a sudden revolution carried out by one or two men. As I see it, the process probably began as early as the second half of the seventeenth century, and was certainly far from complete by 1735. As far as we know, the first Grand Lodge was not very interested in matters of ritual, nor did it generally interfere in such matters, the exceptions being the changes introduced in 1730-odd and rescinded in 1809. Just as the practices associated with the communication of the Sacred Word to the operative Masons of Scotland seem to have gradually changed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as a result of various additions and modifications, so the accepted Masons of England gradually erected during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a considerable superstructure of moral teachings on the foundations provided by the somewhat crude usages and phrases connected with the communication of that Word. In no case were the changes sudden, and in no case can it be said that any particular person was responsible for their introduction.

Conclusion. The arguments advanced in this article may be summed up by saying that when the English and Irish evidence relating early eighteenth-century Freemasonry is coordinated, the balance of probabilities seems to be in favour of the view that various important changes in the Masonic mode of working, traces of which can only be traced exactly to the third decade of the eighteenth century, actually originated in an earlier period, most probably in the decade 1680-89, or even somewhat earlier. In support of this tentative conclusion may be considered the fact that as early as 1688 the practice of operatives assisting brethren in distress had apparently been adopted by accepted Masons in England and Ireland, judging by Aubrey's statement in 1686 that "when one of their number is ruined, the fraternity must succour him," and by the reference in the Dublin list of 1688 to the aid given to a destitute brother by the Fraternity of Freemasons in and around Trinity College. The only reference to Charity in the Ms. Constitutions is the duty to receive and support foreign Masons by providing them with work for at least a fortnight, or by giving them money to get to the next lodge. On the other hand, the 1670 Statutes of Aberdeen Lodge contain regulations about the Masonic Fund. If Assistance had been adopted as one of Grand Principles of 1688 Accepted Masonry, as would appear to have been the case, it would not be surprising if some sort of address about Charity had been introduced at the Acceptance Ceremony around that time, to supplement any reference to it that might have been included in the Lodge By-Laws. If this conjecture is correct, a further change would have been introduced into Masonic work circa 1680. That considerable modifications of the mode of operative work were probably effected by accepted Masons around 1686 is also suggested by Aubrey's statement that "the manner of their Adoption is very formal," an observation which would not apply very adequately to the somewhat crude customs and phrases connected in seventeenth-century Scotland with the communication of the Sacred Word. Thus, all things considered, there would seem to be reasonably good grounds for thinking that some of the important changes introduced by the Accepted Masons into the old operative ceremonies were already in existence in the last decades of the seventeenth century, thirty years or more before the date commonly supposed. Translation: J. M. R.

NOTES

1

In the preparation of this essay, which is to be communicated very shortly to the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, I have been assisted by very helpful suggestions and criticisms from my colleagues, G. P. Jones and Douglas Hamer. I am also indebted to Mr. H. M. McKechnie, Secretary of the Manchester University Press, who very kindly prepared it for press. I must also thank my colleague, A. G. Pool, for reading the galley proofs, and Bro. J. Heron Lepper for very kindly sending me several comments. As he is in general agreement with my conclusions, I have not wished to incorporate his remarks, but let him present his views to the Brothers when the paper is read in lodge.

2

We translate throughout the text 'Mason Word' as 'Sacred Word', the corresponding word in other non-English Rites [N. of T.].

3

Group of manuscripts among the so-called "Old Charges"; the original of this one is considered to have been written after 1663 [N. of T.].

4

In A Mason's Examination, 1723 (included in The Early Masonic Catechisms, see here) we read: "After which, he is to contemplate a thousand different Postures and Grimaces, all of which he is to imitate exactly.

5

In the manuscript of chapters 14-22 of the Third book of The Academie of Armory (B. M. Harl. Ms. 2033, published by the Roxburghe Club in 1905), Randle Holme discusses the tools of various trades, but those of the Masons are not included.

THE SPEECHES OF ANDREW M. RAMSAY(1736 - 1737)

Andrew Michael Ramsay was born in 1686 in Ayr, Scotland, and died in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France, in 1743.

He was preceptor to great families: Wemyss, Sassenage, Stuart (Rome, 1724), Château-Thierry, Bouillon. Made Knight of St. Lazarus by the Duke of Orleans, regent of France and Grand Master of that Order, in 1723. Writer and author of The Philosophical principles of natural and revealed religion unfolded in geometrical order, 1748. Grand Orator of the Order in France, his Discourse, of which we offer two versions, is well-known - and famous - testimony to the esoteric thought present in the "high degrees" of "Scottishness", a discourse to which the origin of the latter has come to be attributed, and not only as the expression of an already existing current. The first was delivered at the Parisian lodge Saint Thomas No. 1, the first lodge founded in France, in 1725, by English nobles, two of whom, after the Duke of Wharton, were to be the first Grand Masters of Freemasonry in that country. The second before a general assembly of the French Order. According to D. Ligou's Dictionary, "it is above all Ramsay's Discourse which makes one of the pillars of French Freemasonry".

Both versions are published by P. Négrier in his book Textes fondateurs de la Tradition maçonnique (see here p. 397).

[It should be noted with regard to the term "dogmas" which appears in the writing, that in the language of the 18th century this word should be interpreted as "beliefs" or experiences of an intellectual-spiritual order].

"1736 Speech of the Lord Knight of Ramsay delivered in St. John's Lodge on 26th Dec.

Gentlemen,

The noble enthusiasm which you show for joining the ancient and most illustrious Order of Freemasons is an evident proof that you already possess all the qualities necessary to become its members. These qualities are philanthropy, inviolable secrecy and a taste for the fine arts.

Lycurgus, Solon, Numa and all the other political legislators did not succeed in making their institutions lasting: however wise their laws may have been, they could not have extended to all countries and endured through the centuries. Because they were based on victories and conquests, on military violence and on the domination of one people over another, they could not become universal and adapted to the tastes, genius and interests of nations. They were not based on philanthropy: the false love for a parcel of men, who inhabit a small region of the universe called the fatherland, destroyed in all these warlike republics the love for humanity in general. Men, fundamentally, are not differentiated by the languages they speak, the clothes they wear or the corners of this anthill they inhabit. The whole world is but one great republic, in which every nation is a family and every individual a child. Gentlemen, our society was established to revive and propagate the ancient maxims taken from the nature of mankind. We wish to bring together all men of sublime taste and agreeable humour through the love of the fine arts, where ambition becomes a virtue and the feeling of benevolence for the brotherhood is the same as that for the whole human race, where all nations can obtain sound knowledge and where the subjects of all kingdoms can co-operate without jealousy, live without discord, and love each other. Without renouncing its principles, we banish from our laws all disputes which may disturb tranquillity of spirit, delicacy of manners, affectionate feelings, legitimate joy, and that absolute harmony which is only to be found in the elimination of all undue excesses and of all discordant passions.

We also have our mysteries: they are signs representing our science, very ancient hieroglyphs and words taken from our art; all of compose a language sometimes mute and sometimes very eloquent for communicating over great distances, and for recognising our brothers regardless of language or country. first, only literal meaning is made known to newcomers. It is only to the adepts that the sublime and symbolic meaning of our mysteries is revealed. It is thus that the Orientals, the Egyptians, the Greeks and the sages of all nations concealed their dogmas by means of figures, symbols and hieroglyphics. Often the literal meaning of our laws, our rites and our secrets offers to reason only a host of unintelligible words; but the initiated find in them an exquisite delicacy which nourishes, which elevates, and which reminds the spirit of the most sublime truths. It has happened to us what has hardly ever happened to us.

It has never happened to any other society. Our lodges have long established and are now spread over all the civilised nations of the world; yet among so great a multitude of men no brother has ever betrayed our secret. From the moment they begin to join our brotherhood, the most frivolous, the most indiscreet and the least educated learn to keep this great science to themselves; then they seem to transform themselves and become new men, impenetrable and penetrating at the same time. If anyone should break the oaths that bind us together, we have no penal law except remorse of conscience and exclusion from our society, according to the following words of Horace:

Est et fideli tuta silentio
Merces: vetabo, qui Cereris sacrum
Vulgarit arcanæ, sub isdem
Sit trabibus, fragilemve mecum
Solvat phaselum.

Horace, in ancient times, was orator of a great lodge established in Rome by Augustus, while Maecenas and Agrippa were his overseers. The best odes of this poet are hymns which he composed to be sung at our orgies. Yes, gentlemen, the famous feasts of Ceres at Eleusis, of which Horace speaks, as well as those of Minerva at Athens and of Isis in Egypt, were nothing else than lodges of our initiates, where our mysteries were celebrated with meals and libations, but without the excesses, the debaucheries, and without the intemperance into which the pagans fell, after they had abandoned the wisdom of our principles and the purity of our maxims.

A taste for the liberal arts is the third quality required to enter our Order; the perfection of this taste is the essence, the end and the object of our union. Of all the mathematical sciences, that of Architecture, whether civil, naval or military, is undoubtedly the most useful and the most ancient. It is through it that we defend ourselves against the insults of the air, against the instability of the waves and above all against the fury of other men.

It is through our art that mortals have found the secret of building houses and cities for the purpose of gathering great societies; the secret of traversing the oceans to carry from one hemisphere to another the riches of the earth and the seas, and finally the secret of building walls and machines against an enemy more terrible than the elements and the animals, I mean against man himself, who is nothing but a ferocious beast, unless his nature is tempered with the gentleness, peace and philanthropy of the maxims that reign in our society.

Such, gentlemen, are the qualities required in our Order of which we will now reveal, in a few words, the origin and history.

Our science is as old as mankind, but the general history of art must not be confused with the particular history of our society. There have been architects in every country and in every century, but all these architects were not Freemasons initiated into our mysteries. Every family, every republic and every empire whose origin is lost in the mists of time has its fable and its truth, its legend and its history, its fiction and its reality. The difference between our traditions and those of all other human societies is that ours are founded on the annals of the most ancient people in the universe, the only one which today retains the same name it once had, which is not confused with other nations even though it is scattered throughout the world.

everywhere, and finally, the only one that has preserved its ancient books, contrary to almost all other peoples in which they have been lost. So here is what I have been able to gather about our origin from the very ancient archives of our Order, from the Acts of Parliament in England which frequently speak of our privileges, and from the present jurisdiction of a country which has been the centre of our arcane science since the tenth century. Gentlemen, give yourselves more attention; vigilant brethren guard the lodge, keep profane vulgarity out of this place.

Procul oh procul este profani, odi profanum vulgus et arceo, favete linguis.

The supreme taste for order, symmetry and projection can only be inspired by the Great Geometer, the architect of the Universe, whose eternal ideas are the models of true beauty. Moreover, we see in the sacred annals of the lawgiver of the Jews that it was God Himself who taught the restorer of the human race the proportions of the floating construction whose function was to preserve during the Flood the animals of all species to repopulate our globe, when it should emerge from the bosom of the waters. Noah must therefore be regarded as the author and inventor of naval architecture as well as the first great master of our Order.

The arcane science was handed down through an oral tradition from Noah to Abraham and the patriarchs, the last of whom brought our sublime art to Egypt. It was Joseph who gave the Egyptians the first idea for the construction of the labyrinths, pyramids and obelisks that have been admired in all ages. It is by this patriarchal tradition that our laws and our maxims spread in Asia, Egypt, Greece, and among all the Gentiles; but our mysteries were soon altered, degraded, deformed, and mixed with superstitions, and the secret science was only kept pure among the people of God.

Moses, inspired by the Most High, had a movable temple built in the desert according to the model that had been revealed to him in a celestial vision on the summit of the sacred mountain, clear proof that the laws of our art are observed in the invisible world where all is harmony, order and proportion. This travelling tabernacle, a copy of the invisible palace of the Most High, which is the upper world, later became the model of the famous temple of Solomon, the wisest of kings and of mortals. This superb edifice, supported by fifteen hundred columns of Paros marble, with more than two thousand windows, seating four hundred thousand people, was built in seven years by more than three thousand princes or master masons, whose chief was Hiram-Abif, grand master of the lodge of Tyre, to whom Solomon entrusted all our mysteries. He was the first martyr of our Order? his fidelity must be preserved? his illustrious sacrifice. After his death, King Solomon wrote in hieroglyphics our statute, our maxims and our mysteries, and this ancient book is the original code of our Order.

After the destruction of the first temple and the captivity of the chosen nation, the Lord's anointed, the great Cyrus who had been initiated into all our mysteries, appointed Zerubbabel as grand master of the lodge of Jerusalem, and ordered him to lay the foundation of the second temple where the mysterious Book of Solomon was deposited. For twelve centuries this Book was preserved in the temple of the Israelites, but after the destruction of the second temple and the dispersion of these people during the empire of Titus, the ancient book was lost until the time of the Crusades, when part of it was found after the capture of Jerusalem. This sacred code was deciphered and without penetrating into the sublime spirit of all the hieroglyphs that were found, our ancient Order was resurrected, of which Noah, Abraham, the

The whole world is but one great republic, in which every nation is a family and every individual a child. The whole world is but one great republic, in which every nation is a family and every individual a child. Our society was established to revive and propagate the ancient maxims taken from the nature of man. We wish to bring together all men of enlightened mind and pleasant humour not only through the love of the fine arts, but also through the great principles of virtue; in them the interest of fellowship becomes the interest of the whole human race, through them all nations can gain sound knowledge, and all the subjects of the different kingdoms can co-operate without jealousy, live without discord, and love each other without renouncing their country.

Our ancestors, the Crusaders, coming from all parts of Christendom and gathered in the Holy Land, wished in this way to bring together the subjects of all nations into one fellowship. What do we not owe to these superior men who, without vulgar interests and without listening to the natural desire to dominate, imagined an institution whose sole purpose is to bring minds and hearts together for the purpose of making them better. And, without going against the duties which the different states demand, to form in time a spiritual nation in which a new people will be created which, having the characteristics of many nations, will cement them all, as it were, with the bonds of virtue and science.

Sound morals are the second requirement of our society. Religious Orders were established to make men perfect Christians; military Orders to inspire love of noble glory; Order of Freemasons was established to form men and men of kindness, good citizens and good subjects, inviolable in their promises, faithful worshippers of the God of friendship, lovers of virtue rather than lovers of rewards.

Polliciti servare fidem, sanctumque vereri
Numen amicitiae, mores, non munera amare.

However, we are not limited to purely civil virtues. We have among us three categories of brothers: beginners or apprentices, companions or professed, masters or perfect. To the first we make known the moral and philanthropic virtues, to the second the heroic virtues, to the last superhuman and divine virtues. Thus our institution contains the whole philosophy of the sentiments and the whole theology of the heart. It is for this reason that one of our venerable brothers, in an ode full of noble enthusiasm, said:

Freemasons, illustrious Grand
Master Receive my first raptures
In my heart the order gives birth to them;
Happy! if noble efforts
You make me worthy of esteem, You elevate
me to the true sublime.
At the first truth
To the pure and divine
essence Of the celestial soul
origin Source of life and
clarity.

Since a severe, solitary, sad and misanthropic philosophy robs men of their taste for virtues, our ancestors the Crusaders wanted it to be friendly with the attraction of innocent pleasures, pleasant music, pure joy and moderate cheerfulness. Our

The feelings are not what the profane world and the ignorant vulgar imagine them to be. All vices of the heart and spirit are banished, as well as irreligion and licentiousness, unbelief and wantonness.

It is in this spirit that one of our poets says:

Today we follow little-travelled paths
We strive to build and all of our constructions
They are either prisons for
vices OR temples for virtues.

Our dinners resemble the virtuous banquets of Horace in which one was sustained by all that could enlighten the spirit, perfect the heart and inspire a taste for the true, the good and the beautiful:

O! noctes, coenaeque Deum...
Sermo oritur non de regnis domibusve alienis;
...sed quod magis ad nos
Pertinet, et nescire malum est, agitamus; utrumne
Divitiis homines, an sint virtute beati;
Quidve ad amicitias usus rectumve trahat nos
Et quae sit natura boni, summumque quid ejus.

Here the love of all longings is fortified. We banish from our Lodges all quarrels which would disturb the tranquillity of spirit, the sweetness manners, the feelings of friendship, and the perfect harmony which is only to be found in the elimination of all undue excesses and all discordant passions.

Therefore, the obligations that the Order imposes on you are: to protect the brothers through authority, to enlighten them with your knowledge, to edify them with the virtues that you possess, to help them in their needs, to sacrifice all personal resentment and to seek all that can contribute to peace, harmony and the union of society.

We have secrets: they are figurative signs and sacred words that constitute a language sometimes mute and sometimes very eloquent, in order to transmit it over great distances and to recognise our brothers regardless of their language or country. They were apparently words of war that the Crusaders exchanged to protect themselves from the surprises of the Saracens, who often infiltrated in disguise to betray and assassinate them. These signs and words remind us of an aspect of our science, a moral virtue or a mystery of faith.

It happened to us what has hardly ever happened to any other society.

Our lodges have been constituted and are spread today in all civilised nations, and yet, in spite of so great a multitude of men, no brother has ever betrayed our secrets. The most frivolous people, the most indiscreet and the least instructed to keep silent, learn this great science as soon as they enter our society; so great is the power which the idea of fraternal union has over the spirits! This inviolable secret contributes in a powerful way to bind together the subjects of all countries, and to make the communication of good deeds easy and mutual. We find many examples of this in the Annals of our Order: our brothers who travelled to different countries in Europe, when they found themselves in need, would

They made themselves known to our lodges and were immediately showered with all the help they needed. Even in the time of the bloodiest wars, some illustrious prisoners found brothers where they thought they found only enemies. Should anyone break the solemn promises which bind us, you know, gentlemen, that the greatest penalties are remorse of conscience, shame for their perfidy and exclusion from our society in the beautiful words of Horace:

Est et fideli tuta silentio
Merces; vetabo qui Cereris sacrum
Vulgarit arcanæ, sub isdem
Sit trabibus, fragilemve mecum
Solvat phaselum....

Yes gentlemen, the famous feasts of Ceres at Eleusis, of which Horace speaks, as well as those of Isis in Egypt, of Minerva in Athens, of Urania among the Phoenicians and of Diana in Scythia were related to our solemnities. At these feasts, mysteries were celebrated where many vestiges of the ancient religion of Noah and the patriarchs could be found; they were then closed with banquets and libations, but without the excesses, debauchery and intemperance into which the pagans gradually fell. To admit persons of either sex to the nightly assemblies, and thus to oppose the primitive institution, was the cause of all the infamies. It is to prevent such abuses that women are excluded from our Order. It is not that we are unjust to consider the sex as incapable of keeping a secret, but that their presence might slightly alter the purity of our maxims and of our customs:

If sex is banished, no alarm is not an outrage
to their fidelity.
But we fear that when love enters with its charms, it
will produce a forgetfulness of fraternity.
The names of brother and friend would be weak
weapons To protect hearts against rivalry.

The fourth quality required to enter our Order is a taste for the useful sciences and for the liberal arts of all kinds; thus the Order requires of each one of you to contribute by your protection, your liberality or your work to a great work for which no Academy and no university can be sufficient, because all the particular societies, being composed of a very small number of men, cannot encompass with their work so immense an object. All the Grand Masters of Germany, of England, of Italy, and of all Europe, exhort all the scholars and all the artists of the confraternity to unite in order to provide the documentation for a universal Dictionary of all the liberal arts and of all the useful sciences, with the sole exception of theology and politics. The work has already begun in London; but with the union of our brethren it can be brought to perfection in a few years. It will not only explain the technical word and its etymology, but will also present the history of science and art, their great principles, and the manner of working with them. In this way the intelligences of all nations will be brought together in a single work, which will be like a general repository, and a universal library of all that is beautiful, great, luminous, solid and useful in all the natural sciences and in all the noble arts. This work will increase every century, as knowledge increases; it is in this way that a noble emulation in the taste for the fine arts and for the fine arts will spread throughout Europe.

The name of Freemasons should not therefore be taken in a literal, vulgar and material sense, as if our instructors had been mere

stone or marble workers, or simply curious geniuses who wanted to perfect the arts. They were not only skilled architects who wanted to devote their talents and their goods to the construction of the outer temples, but also religious princes and warriors who wanted to illuminate, build and protect the living temples of the Most High. This is what I will now explain to you, developing for you the origin and the history of the Order.

Every family, every republic and every empire whose origin is lost in the mists of time has its fable and its truth, its legend and its history, its fiction and its reality. Some believe that our institution dates back to the time of Solomon, of Moses, of the patriarchs, of Noah himself. Others claim that our founder was Enoch, the grandson of the Protoplast who built the first city and named it after himself. I briefly mentioned this fabulous origin before coming to our true history. Here, therefore, is what I have been able to glean from the very ancient Annals of the history of Great Britain, from the acts of the Parliament of England, which often speak of our privileges, and from the living tradition of the British nation which, since the eleventh century, has been the centre and seat of our fellowship.

From the time of the holy wars in Palestine, many princes, lords and citizens joined together, vowed to restore the Christian temples in the Holy Land and, by means of an oath, undertook to use their talents and their property to restore the architecture to its primitive constitution. By common agreement, they adapted several ancient signs, symbolic words taken from the religious background, in order to differentiate themselves from the infidels and to recognise themselves in relation to the Saracens. These signs and words were only communicated to those who solemnly promised, often at the foot of the , never to reveal them. This sacred promise was then no longer an execrable oath, as the story goes, but a respectable bond to unite men of all nations in the same fellowship.

Some time later, our Order became intimately united with the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. From then on our lodges bore the name of the lodges of St. John in all countries.¹ This union was carried out in imitation of the Israelites when they built the second temple, while they worked with one hand with the trowel and mortar, carrying in the other the sword and shield (Ezra ch. IV, v. 16).

Our Order is therefore not to be regarded as a revival of bacchanalia and a source of excessive profligacy, unbridled debauchery and scandalous intemperance, but as a moral Order, instituted by our ancestors in the Holy Land to recall the sublimest truths amidst the innocent pleasures of society.

Kings, princes and lords, returning from Palestine to their own countries, established various lodges. Since the time of the last crusades, many lodges have been founded in Germany, Italy, Spain, France, and from there in Scotland, because of the close alliance between these two nations at that time.

James Lord Stuart of Scotland was Grand Master of a lodge that was established at Kilwinning in the west of Scotland in the year 1286, shortly after the death of Alexander III King of Scotland, and a year before Jean Baliol came to the throne. This Scottish lord initiated into his lodge the Earls of Gloucester and Ulster, English and Irish lords.

Gradually our lodges, our feasts and our solemnities were neglected in most of the countries in which they were established. This is the reason for the silence of the historians of almost all kingdoms with regard to our Order, with the exception of the historians of Great Britain. They were, however, preserved in all their splendour among the Scots, to whom our kings entrusted for many centuries the guardianship of their sacred person. After the deplorable reverses of the crusades, the decline of the Christian armies, and the triumph of Bendocdar Sultan of Egypt, during the eighth and last crusade, the son of Henry III of England, the great Prince Edward, seeing that there was no longer safety for his brethren in the Holy Land, sent them all back when the Christian troops withdrew, and this colony of brethren was established in England. Since this prince was endowed with all the qualities of heart and spirit that make heroes, and loved the fine arts, he declared himself the protector of our Order, granted it many privileges and franchises, and from that time the members of this confraternity took the name of Freemasons.

From this time Britain became the seat of our science, the preserver of our laws and the repository of our secrets. The fatal discords of religion which inflamed and tore Europe in the sixteenth century caused our Order to deviate from the grandeur and nobility of its origin. Many of our rites and customs that were contrary to the prejudices of the time were changed, disguised or suppressed. Thus it is that many of our brethren have, like the ancient Jews, forgotten the spirit of our law, and have retained only its letter and outward appearance. Our Great Master, whose respectable qualities still surpass his distinguished birth, wants to return everything to its original constitution, in a country where religion and State can only favour our laws.

From the British Isles, the ancient science begins to pass to France again under the reign of the most amiable of kings, whose humanity is the soul of all virtues, with the intervention of a Mentor who has realised everything fabulous that had been imagined. In this happy moment when the love of peace becomes the virtue of heroes, the most spiritual nation in Europe will become the centre of the Order; it will pour out upon our works, our statutes and our customs, the graces, the delicacy and the good taste, qualities essential in an Order whose basis is wisdom, strength and the beauty of genius. It is in our future lodges, as in public schools, that the French will see, without travelling, the characteristics of all nations and it is in these same lodges that foreigners will learn by experience that France is the true homeland of all peoples. *Patria gentis humanae.*

Translation: Nadia Citon and Jamileth Brenes

NOTE

1

As we know, the theme of the two S. Johns is much more profound: they correspond to the symbolism of Janus among the Romans (to his two visible faces), linked to the two solstices in the year and the two columns in the lodge, north and south, extreme points of the sun that point to the two doors of the initiatory cavern.

(N.
Ed.).

THE PLOUGH AND ITS RITUAL SALUTE

As all brothers know, the Ara is the altar of our workshop which is also our temple and therefore an image of the cosmos. In the centre of this space, between the door and the East and the columns of the North and South, is our altar illuminated by the lights of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. This stone or altar, by marking the centre, also marks the axis of the workshop, that is to say, the possibility of high/low, ascending/descending communication between earth and heaven, which in symbolic form is represented on the ceiling. And it is through the rite of our studies and work, through our ceremonies and invariable gestures that this communication is reactivated and becomes in us, who then put ourselves in a position to receive the effluvia from above, the inspirations emanating from the Great Architect of the Universe, which constitute all Knowledge and Wisdom. The altar is therefore the most important point of the temple, from which the whole Lodge and its work is organised. It is the symbol of the invisible par excellence, which it expresses formally and sensibly, and to it the whole Lodge looks simultaneously, both to the East and to the other cardinal points. The square and the compass are above it, symbolising the union between the earth (the square, the quadrangle) and the sky (the compass, the circle), since it manifests the "axis" in which the polarities are conjugated.

We already know that our Lodge, symbolising the cosmos, symbolises both the macrocosm and the microcosm, since the latter is a miniature of the former, so that the workshop is also an image of our inner temple, and the altar, being its central point, corresponds in the human being to his heart, the place where the word and the divine wisdom - attested by the Sacred Book that rests on our altar - are received, the place of transformations and realisation. It is towards this transmutation that our efforts are directed; which is the same as polishing the rough stone, or ascending in steps the successive stages of Knowledge, which corresponds to the degrees of our Order. This possibility of ascent and improvement is always present in the breast of every apprentice, companion or teacher, who, by virtue of having received initiation, is specially qualified to make these symbols effective, to make them an inner reality, acting in us as they are evoked by meditation, study and ritual reiteration.

Finally, we would also like to recall that the altar is the place where we take our oaths, as a visible manifestation of an invisible and transcendent energy. It is upon it, as the image of the spiritual centre, and in the depths of our heart, that we have accepted our inner commitments and promised to fulfil them, to carry them out. This may seem ridiculous to one who is ignorant of all symbolism or who has not been able to truly emerge from the profane world. But it is not to Masons, who understand the symbol and the rite in their hearts, and who put them into practice by living them. That is why ritual gestures are so important, for through them the possibilities they contain are renewed, for they express exactly a cosmogony in motion, a cosmodrama, even if this circumstance is ignored. However, it is obvious to understand that every time we pass by the Altar and salute it, we are not only showing respect to the symbol in question and all that we have said about what it represents, but we are also ritually renewing our Masonic commitments and promises, reconnecting with them precisely at the place of the reception of the emanations of the Great Architect of the Universe, which is a perennial reminder of our authentic Masonic quality.

And we ask ourselves, finally, is it not to this identification that the opening ritual alludes to when we walk "along the paths that have been laid out for us"? And are not these "laid out paths" in fact the very traditional heritage whose origin lies in that primordial gesture, and which we have to update by transmitting it in the historical cycle that is ours to pass on?
live?

TWO MASONIC THEMES

"With joy".

Dear Brethren, we wish to emphasise the words that are repeated at the end of our meetings in an attempt to avoid any risk of misunderstanding any of the characteristics of true Masons, as far as our Order is concerned. So I think we should begin by remembering that the Lodge is an image of the cosmos, and the rites and gestures performed there are a perfectly ordered recreation of the cosmogony as it is presented to the intelligent human being. However, every operative Mason knows that the cosmogonic order is itself an image of the metaphysical - hence the Masonic secret - to which one must aspire in body, soul and spirit; hence the need and meaning of different degrees of realisation and knowledge among the Sons of the Widow. It must be understood then that this aspiration to the higher - aerial and ungraspable - is opposed to the pretension to the lower - earthly and fossilised, and therefore constitutes something more akin to dissolution than to coagulation.

In truth this whole world in which we live exists in order to leave it, because it is an illusory image of reality, which is seen in the ascent through the degrees, or worlds, which they symbolise, where things become more and more certain the stranger they appear to us. But to get there, one must first become a Master or True Man, and then begin again the ascent through the symbolic degrees, intimately related to the supracosmic, taking as a starting point the cosmos, or logos, from which our workshop derives its name. This is perfectly logical, since symbols, rites and myths are thought to exist as messengers of other realities, and never to be clung to with such obstinacy and mediocrity.

Some Brethren may not yet understand these concepts - and some may never understand them - but they must be aware of matters ever present from the operative period in Freemasonry, where the symbolic and initiatory rites could never be resolved in the simple act of constructing buildings, even if they were beautiful temples.

It is unfortunate, but there are people who see solemnity as a value in , or as something to be repeated as if it were the true rite, and in that sense they are the analogues - the unversed - of those who do not realise that every act is solemn per se, and so engage in raiding and plundering. Between the solemn fool and the shameless rogue there is no great distance from a slightly higher point of view; and both conform to the ignorance of the medium with which they cannot but self-identify. Moreover, the solemn fool and the shameless rogue may one and the same person. But we are not concerned at this time with any rogue, of whom there are few in the Lodges and who are almost immediately unmasked by their brethren, and we are concerned that the ritual, which is one with the Lodge, may be transposed by us outside with a quasi-religious and literal imposition, totally inimical to true Knowledge, to the Symbol, which is truly the work to which any Mason must dedicate himself. Which, by

The dignity is proper to every Mason inasmuch as it is proper to every Initiate or True Man. Dignity is proper to every Mason inasmuch as it is proper to any Initiate or True Man; there is no need, therefore, to imposture the voice, nor to try to "outdo" any gesture, already solemn in itself. Nor should one be so ridiculous as to pretend to surpass one's brethren in wisdom, or to be so childish as to believe that one has "progressed" to the detriment of others, which would indicate an utter lack of seriousness. With mastery, youth is over, even if one is in one's twenties, for it is only then that one will begin to embark on the path to the supra-cosmic. To remain, therefore, in literal concepts and solemn attitudes is sometimes an irreparable harm to oneself and to all those who share our work and who have come to the Order looking for what it is, and not for great "sages" who are as conceited as they are superficial. When in operative Freemasonry the workmen finished their work and the gestures necessary to their labour, they hung up their aprons in the workshop and certainly did not repeat those gestures at home or with their friends in the wet room, where they were all free men; nor on Sundays, or on the innumerable calendar festivals, or in the street, where those clothes and attitudes do not correspond, since the rite of everyday life is perfectly sufficient and postures of this kind are in abundance.

That is why at the end of our work we repeat in answer to a question the phrase "with joy", which a true Mason should never forget.

We should therefore take precautions and take cover from the formal - which, however, is what has given us nothing less than form - by confusing it, or worse, by imagining it to be superior to the a-formal, which is the end of aspiration and hope. With joy!

Bible, c.1250

Connecting chain

As you all know, at the end of our meetings we conclude the rite with the so-called Chain of Union. This chain that unites us all, from the Venerable to the new apprentices has, among others, two meanings that we would like to highlight at this point.

In the first place, it is an image on the plane of the vertical chain which connects with the origins of our Order and ensures a regular transmission, through the initiates of all times, with the Great Universal Architect. This takes place through our symbols, rites and myths which are but prototypical manifestations of permanent archetypes which, today as yesterday, are present in the cosmic plan and structure.

Secondly, and as its name indicates, it signifies the real and effective union of the members of the Lodge into a new entity which rejects individualities and integrates them into a unitary organism of greater energy and scope by its own transpersonal characteristics, thus forming a collective whose strength is greater than the sum of the individual elements, as you well know from your own experience, for you have already participated in its composition. It should be noted that this fraternal chain refers not only to our Lodge, or to our obligations to the entire Masonic brotherhood, but to humanity in general, and in particular to all initiates who have known the path of knowledge by other ways than our own.

We must remember however that when it begins to form, this chain is incomplete and there is a gap in it, a link that has not yet been closed, so the Venerable Master asks: "Dear Brothers, Master of Ceremonies Why is the chain broken?"

And the Master of Ceremonies responds:

"For our imperfections Venerable Master".

Then the Venerable Master asks again, "How can we close it?"

And the Master of Ceremonies replies:

"With the sacred words of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. One for all and all for one, repeated three times".

"Close it, dear brother," commands the Worshipful, and as the Master of Ceremonies does so, the members of the Lodge utter the sacred words three times, their right arms over their left and linking their fingers with those at their sides, forming a perfect magical circle of concentrated vibrations, a generating dynamo, not only capable of transmitting its force to each of the members, but of emanating it to other visible and invisible spaces; an active form of invocation and also an incantation of protection for all those who have the grace to participate in the mysteries of the Sacred Art, the so-called guardians of the Temple of Solomon wisdom, the image of all temples, who as part of their functions must know how to close their ranks and work harmoniously, tending towards perfection.

TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

The gaze, which is an intelligent gesture, by illuminating an environment, usually locates us in some way in that web of relations. Perhaps that is why, when dressed - or undressed - in an apparently strange way, I was deprived of outside vision and disoriented after an almost labyrinthine journey, I found myself in a situation that was quite new to me, surely as virginal as it was unfamiliar.

It seems that the long time spent in the Chamber of Reflection contributed to all this, where I was visited by various characters and attitudes, from the funny to the tragic, most of them familiar from profane times, who, bored, ended up leaving me alone with myself, at least for that day.

Thus I found myself in a space of which I did not know the limits and in which not even the support of my guide, though so fraternal, seemed familiar. When I heard the violent blows of the latter and the response from within, I was shocked to think that I might desecrate works that were sacred in their nature, but I came to my senses as I remembered that no one can do the work by oneself and that no one can do the work by oneself.

that any help would come from the One in whom I have believed since before I can remember.

And I have to say that, unable perhaps to pinpoint individualities and therefore to judge, or rather, unable to separate the symbol from the Symbolised, I was certain that it was the Universal Intelligence itself, that which understands only the One, that spoke to me and with it all the Masons who had realised or will realise that Knowledge to whatever extent, assimilating themselves to It, becoming one with It.

It was also like the recognition of a heritage which belongs to one and which is more one's own - and one is more that - than anything learned from outside. And I am not referring only to affinity with a particular form of Tradition, or of the Transmission and Reception of Knowledge, which is entirely secondary and does not exceed the individual plane, but to that transcendent Knowledge which, by revealing itself in one, can redeem one from a world which has no end in itself.

For it is evident that this geometrical point where the Sons of the Widow gather, does not refer only to a geographical place, which could change from day to day, or to a community of social or moral interests for which there are already other organs and institutions which are not and need not be initiatory. Being the place of ritual work, i.e. in accordance with the sacred order of the cosmos, work of transmutation and transformation, its very centre is supra-spatial and supra-temporal, and in it things and beings are already one of all eternity, before all succession, just as the point contains within itself the whole quality of space, which is but the unfolding of all its possibilities of expression.

EMBLEMS OF THE 33 DEGREES OF THE ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE

We offer here the series of the coats of arms of the 33 Masonic Degrees of our Rite. The very beautiful engravings illustrating this subject are taken from the scholarly work *Manuel Maçonnique du Rite Écossais Ancien et Accepté* by Roger Bongard (Dervy Livres, Paris, 1979). Please note that these emblems not the respective Lodge Charts. To enter the successive series click

1.Apprentice 2. Peer 3. Master 4.
6. Intimate Secretary 7. Provost and Judge 8.
9. Chosen Master of the Nine 10. Chosen Master of the Fifteen 11. Sublime Chosen Knight 12. Grand Master Architect 13. Knight of the East or of the Sword 16. Prince of Jerusalem 17. Knight of the East and West 18. Sovereign Prince Rose-Cross 19. Grand Pontiff or Sublime Scotsman 20. Worshipful Grand Master of all Lodges 21. Noachite or Prussian Knight 22. Royal Axe or Prince of Lebanon 23. Sovereign Commander

Grand Chosen Knight Kadosh 31. Grand Inquisitor, Sovereign Commander 32.
Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret 33.

VETERA INSTITUTA ET FUNDAMENTA ORDINIS

ORDINIS ROYAL ORDER OF HEREDOM OF

KILWINNING

Item 1. About the name of the Royal Order of Heredom of Kilwinning
The very name of the Royal Order includes a number of little-known meanings which, when revealed, reveal hidden aspects of the Order's history, tradition and affiliation.

The word "Heredom" has aroused the interest and curiosity of many scholars and different kinds of interpretations of its meaning have been formulated, some accurate and some totally wrong.

René Guénon has referred at length to the meaning of the word "Heredom" on several occasions. René Guénon has referred at length to the meaning of the word "Heredom" on several occasions.

The first thing to consider is that the different meanings of this word all come from the root formed by the consonants "HRDM". As in Hebrew and Arabic, the meanings of this root vary according to the different vowels interpolated between its consonants.

In this way, the following meanings, among others, could be established:

- 1) HeiRDoM, English word meaning "inheritance" or heir".
- 2) HieRos DoMos, a mixed word - Greek and Latin - meaning "sacred house" which is equivalent to "temple".
- 3) HaRoDiM, a word transliterated from the Hebrew which designated the Overseers and Superintendents of the Works during the building of Solomon's Temple (Kings II), i.e. the superior Officers of a Lodge. On the other hand, it should be remembered that the Scottish town of Kilwinning is famous both for its early Celtic-Culdean influenced abbey and for its ancient working Lodge, the oldest on record.

, combining the above meanings, we would have the following meanings:

- 1) Royal Order of the "Heritage" or "Heirs" of the Abbey and/or Lodge of Kilwinning.
- 2) Royal Order of the Temple (sacred house, abbey) of Kilwinning (built by their Lodge).

3) Royal Order of the Senior Officers of Kilwinning Lodge. As will be appreciated, all these meanings, far from being mutually exclusive, are perfectly complementary and emphasise the Christian-temple and Masonic aspects of the Royal Order.

Item 2. On the four cornerstones of ancient Heredom Freemasonry
The Royal Order of Heredom of Kilwinning is heir to the ancient medieval brotherhoods gathered around the abbey of Kilwinning (1140 A.D. - Scotland). This abbey housed the Officers, Master Builders and Architects who worked for the Tyronnesian monks of St. Winning who were the depositaries of the Christian-Celtic spirituality of the Culdean Church. Subsequently, the operational Lodge of the abbey was joined to the Order of the Knights of St Andrew of the Thistle, the continuation of Templarism in Scotland since the 14th century, which was founded by King Robert the Bruce, after the Battle of Bannock-Burn (24 June 1314), to protect the Templars who had taken refuge from persecution on the Mull of Kintyre and had helped him decisively in that battle.

The initiatory affiliation of the Royal Order of Heredom of Kilwinning brings together four streams of traditional Western esotericism which constitute the four Cornerstones that support the edifice of the Order. They are:

1) The Solomonic, transmitter of the legend of the construction of Solomon's Temple.

2) The Pythagorean, transmitter of the knowledge of Sacred Geometry.

3) The hermetic, transmitter of the Royal, alchemical and constructive Art.

4) The Templar, transmitter of the Chivalric Way through the Scottish High Degrees belonging to the House of Stuart and the "Jacobite" Lodges The Royal Order practised what, in the 18th century, was called the Early Grand Scottish Rite in its Lodges and Chapters, direct heirs of the four above-mentioned currents.

Item 3. On the Doctrinal and Traditional Principles of the Royal Order In the face of the chaos and mental confusion characteristic of the end of the cycle of the present humanity, it is necessary to set out clearly and simply certain doctrinal landmarks or "Landmarks" to guide the studies of the Brothers and of the eventual Candidates.

All our activities are based exclusively and exclusively on Traditional Esotericism as expounded in the French language by Br. René Guénon. On the contrary, his immense and decisive merit is to have made explicit, in a modern language, the authentic doctrines and methods of the Primordial Tradition and of the particular living traditions derived from it. Considering that a particular living tradition is that which has, today, legitimate and qualified representatives who demonstrate an uninterrupted continuity, an initiatory chain of men and women who are able to demonstrate an uninterrupted continuity, it is a living tradition.

- The only few that have survived to the present day are those that link them to their necessarily superhuman origins.

They are therefore legitimate and living particular traditions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Freemasonry (the latter is a craft initiation whose origin goes back to the beginnings of civilisation and the first foundations of cities and is not to be confused with the deviation called "Speculative Freemasonry" invented in London in 1717).

Thus, the Nordic, Greco-Latin, Egyptian, Celtic-Druidic, Celtic-Druidic and Shamanic traditions in all their present superstitious forms are particular traditions that are definitively extinct and impossible to revive. Not to mention an alleged "Atlantean Tradition" against which we must clearly warn against, for we must remember the nefarious and Luciferian character of Atlantis, sunk in the ocean as divine punishment, by the action of its deviant priesthood and the subversion of its warriors....

Having focused our activity exclusively on Traditional Esotericism, the following trends, practices and schools are automatically excluded from our objectives: theosophism, mysticism, occultism, magic, spiritualism, Afro-Brazilian cults, mind control, etc.

In synthesis: Traditional Esotericism, with its Doctrine and particular methods, aspires to restore man and nature to their original perfection in order to be able - from that central point of existence - to access the knowledge of the higher states of Being by means of the true intelligence: the Intelligence of the Heart....

Item 4. About the History of Ancient Heredom Freemasonry

The Royal Order of Heredom of Kilwinning is heir to very ancient initiatory affiliations and is privileged to have received the rites and traditions of Templarism sheltered on the Mull of Kintyre to escape persecution. After the destruction of the Order of the Templars in most of Europe, the Knights who had taken refuge in Scotland were protected and organised into the Order of St Andrew of the Thistle, founded for them by King Robert the Bruce after the Battle of Bannock-Burn (24 June 1314) to reward their decisive action in that battle which sealed Scotland's independence. Subsequently, they were joined by the Operative Lodges dependent on the Abbey of Kilwinning belonging to the Tyronnese monks. The destiny of the Order became inextricably linked to the House of Stuart during the hereditary Grand Mastership held by the Saint-Clair (Sinclair) clan of Rosslyn (old spelling: Roslin) being the main nucleus of the so-called "Jacobite Freemasonry". Rosslyn Chapel, near Edinburgh, is a mute stony witness to the ancient splendour of authentic Scottish Freemasonry - necessarily Jacobite - in which the remains of the Massenie du Saint-Graal, the vestiges of secret Templarism, the Operative Lodges and nascent Rosicrucianism were fused.

After the fall of the House of Stuart - which brought with it the Sinclair clan of Rosslyn - Jacobite Freemasonry was ruthlessly persecuted by the usurping dynasty on the thrones of Scotland and England into the darkness of history. However, its occult influence was unmistakably felt during the uprising of the Scottish, Irish and North of England Masons nucleated in the so-called Grand Lodge of the "Antients", supported by the Dukes of Atholl, under the leadership of the illustrious Mason Laurence Dermott. These traditional Masons, known as "Ancients", opposed for more than sixty years the "Modern" Masons, followers of the deviation promoted by Pastor Anderson, Payne and Désaguliers.

Throughout his work, René Guénon has dealt extensively with Heredom Freemasonry or Scottish Jacobite Freemasonry. Thus, for example, in his book *The Esotericism of Dante*, he studies the Royal Order of Scotland and its two High Degrees called respectively "Heredom" and "Rossy+Cross"; in the *Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie et le Compagnonnage* appears the famous article entitled "Heredom" where, among other meanings, this word is related to the English word "heirdom" (inheritance) and Guénon himself declares that it is the "inheritance" of the Templars. In his book *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*, in the Chapter "The Boar and the Bear", in one of his customary allusions said in passing but full of meaning, Guénon points out the homonymy between "Caledonia" (the ancient name of Scotland) and the mythical forest of "Calidon" and that, consequently, historical Scotland could have harboured, until a very advanced time, a spiritual centre derived directly from the Primordial Tradition and dependent on the Ultima Thule.... Furthermore, etymologically, "Shetland" literally means "Land of Shet, ie. "Land of Stability".

We must also remember that, after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Earthly Paradise, their son Shet was allowed to return to Eden to retrieve the Holy Grail....

On the other hand, we must remember that the primitive Kilwinning Abbey was built by monks coming from the very ancient monastery of Icolm-Kil, situated on the Scottish island of Iona, belonging to the mysterious Culdean Church, representatives of a pre-Roman and Celtic evangelising current derived directly from primitive Eastern Christianity. In the face of these facts, one cannot but evoke the figures of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, bearers of the Holy Grail from Jerusalem to the British Isles...

In conclusion, it should be noted what is already an open secret within the traditional organisations of Western Esotericism: Jacobite Freemasonry was a "cover" for the occult currents of Templarism subsisting in Scotland, used to correct the deviation represented by Speculative Freemasonry from its own origins. The aim was to heal the London schism of 1717 by superimposing on "Craft" Masonry, various High Degrees conveying certain chivalric initiations to which, by virtue of Scotland's (Caledonia's) relations with the Ultima Thule and with the surviving Templarism within the House of Stuart, the generic name of "Scottish Freemasonry" is perfectly appropriate. Needless to say, the above refers properly to Scottish Masonic Templarism of the 14th to 17th centuries and has little to do with the so-called Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite which, despite its name, is a late creation of the year 1804.

Item 6. On the Christic seal of the Royal Order of Heredom of Kilwinning
In view of the possibility that some Br. - especially from other Obediences - questions about our ceremonies, oaths and consecrations, which are eminently Christian in character, in knowledge of the little or bad information that exists about the Royal Order and in anticipation of the almost certain qualification of lack of "universality" is that we point out the following:

*

Those who instituted the Royal Order of Heredom of Kilwinning, as the legitimate representatives of Scottish Masonic Templarism, never conceived of

The European Union has been seen as alien to Christianity, as this would mean abjuring its ancient origins.

*

Christ's message is universal and this character is manifested by the offering of the three Magi on Christmas Eve: gold, frankincense and myrrh representing the threefold royal, priestly and prophetic power of Jesus Christ. By his priestly quality "according to the Order of Melki-Tsedek", Jesus unites Christianity indissolubly with the Primordial Paradise Tradition, as was rightly pointed out by Bro. René Guénon.

*

Another reason for the extreme steadfastness in maintaining the Christic seal of Heredom Freemasonry was the confrontation with the severe de-Christianisation of the original operative rituals by the opportunists who organised the Grand Lodge of London, which prompted a determined defence of the Tradition.

*

Let us recall the testimony of the illustrious Bro. Joseph de Maistre, Grand Professed of the Rectified Scottish Rite, who in a letter to the Duke of Brunswick-Luneburg, dated 1782, refers to "Primitive Christianity" and affirms that "the true religion is much more than 18 centuries old" and that "it was born on the day when days were born...".

It is in this universality and in this state of mind that the Royal Order realises, beyond the passing of the centuries, the plan of the Great Architect of the Universe.

Although the Royal Order has, from its origin, a Christic and Templar seal, this does not prevent it from receiving Candidates from other regular traditions under the following general conditions:

1) Be physically, mentally and spiritually qualified.

2) Be informed and expressly accept the above-mentioned Christic seal as an indelible mark of the Royal Order without being bound by it in any way whatsoever.

conversion.

Obviously, atheists and participants in all other forms of modern pseudo-spiritual dissolution are disqualified.

The Royal Order does not engage in confessional or political activity of any kind, reserving such practices to the exclusive domain of the individual.

Item 7. On what ancient Heredom Freemasonry is and what it is not The Royal Order of Heredom of Kilwinning represents the primitive form of the Scottish Jacobite Freemasonry and is an Order of Chivalry tributary to Templarism based on Masonic affiliation.

Its existence long predates the emergence of the two great so-called "Scottish" Rites which were formed much later, namely:

. the Rectified Scottish Rite, organised in the Convent of Wilhelmsbad in 1782.

. the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, organised in Charleston in 1804.

Scottish Jacobite Freemasonry disappeared from secular history after the bloody battle of Culloden-Moor (1746) where the legitimate House of Stuart was defeated militarily and definitively.

As a consequence of the Culloden Massacre Sir Charles Ratcliffe, Lord of Derwent-Water and Grand Master of Scottish Jacobite Masonry, along with other prominent Brethren*, was beheaded by axe in the Tower of London on the 8th December 1746.

Years later, the remnants of the scattered Jacobite Masonry joined the revolt of the Ancient Masons (Grand Lodge of Atholl) led by the illustrious Bro. Laurence Dermott (1752) who, leading Irish, Scottish and North of England Masons, clashed fiercely with the modern deviation represented by the Grand Lodge of London (1717) created by Pastor James Anderson.

In our own day, the Royal Order of Heredom of Kilwinning has restored not only the operative spirit of the Royal Craft but - in strict observance of the recommendations and criticisms made by Bro. René Guénon throughout his work - has also rectified the forms and rituals in use in full accordance with the immutable traditional principles of Operative Freemasonry prior to the modern deviation of 1717. Thus, all the illegitimate ideological, social, political, moralistic, sentimental, etc., ideological, social, political, moralistic and sentimental encrustations that the speculative profanation of the "Moderns" managed to infiltrate have been "thrown into the rubble".

Furthermore, the Royal Order has kept alive the traditions, Usages, Customs and Rituals of ancient Operative Freemasonry which have come down to us. Therefore, its charter is not the Constitutions drawn up by Pastor Anderson but the Old Charges of the Operatives, more specifically the so-called "Iñigo Jones" Manuscript (e.g. "The Antient Constitution of Accepted Masons the Free and Accepted Masons", 1607).

For all the above reasons, ancient Heredom Freemasonry is:

. A traditional Western esoteric Order belonging to the Worker and Craft Initiation which has received in trust the inheritance (Heredom=Heirdom) of chivalric and priestly affiliations. Like all authentic esoteric Orders, it has a supra-human origin from which its spiritual influence is transmitted through an unbroken chain of initiates. Derived from ancient Operative Freemasonry and Scottish Jacobite Templarism, it welcomes into its Lodges, with the necessary adaptations, men and women duly qualified in equality of duties and rights.

Consequently, ancient Heredom Freemasonry is not:

. A civil society with profane aims such as progressivism, humanitarianism, secularism, liberalism, etc. and all the other ideologies of modern Western philosophy.

. A special system of morality even though it is "veiled by allegories and illustrated by symbols."

- . A religion, let alone a substitute for them.
- . A religious sect of whatever .
- . A secret society, generating conspiracies and plots.
- . A means of social advancement in secular society.
- . A centre of political activity, more or less exclusive.

Notwithstanding all the above, the Royal Order in no way relinquishes the duties of the Masonic Fraternity and recognises as Brs. Initiates of other Obediences, even if they do not profess the same Land-Marks, are received in our Work as visitors after a previous Re-roofing.

On the other hand, knowing the situation of restricted freedom to which the Brethren members of the modern speculative Obediences are subjected by means of the fallacious concept of administrative "regularity" derived from the Andersonian deviation of 1717, we do not need reciprocity on their part but open the doors of our Lodges so that they may know Traditional Freemasonry restored in its true Principles. In this way we believe we are fulfilling the Masonic precept of "Gathering the dispersed and spreading the Light...".

Item 8. On the agreement on the true Principles of Traditional Freemasonry as expounded by Br.*. René Guénon

The emergence of Modern or Speculative Masonry in 1717, with the organisation of the Grand Lodge of London as a result of the manoeuvres of Pastor Anderson, dealt a serious blow to the Masonic tradition. This modern deviation led, years later, to the great uprising of the operative Masons led by the eminent Bro. Laurence Dermott, who formed the Grand Lodge of the "Antients" to preserve the traditional Ancient Customs.

It is undeniable that the source of the Masonic Tradition lies in Operative Freemasonry prior to 1717 and that the Grand Lodge of London was schismatic and irregular "ab initio". This necessary - but much under-reported - clarification puts the question of Masonic regularity in its true perspective: the emergence of Modern or Speculative Freemasonry is a subversion of the traditional order originating in the unholy intrusion of politics as an unholy consequence of the dynastic and religious wars in the British Isles.

, all Speculative Freemasonry is irregular from its origin, both in its "Anglo-Saxon" side oriented towards Protestant moralism and in its derived "Latin" side, deviating from the original deviation, self-styled progressive, liberal or secularist.

The illustrious Bro. René Guénon was a true Operational Master "in all Degrees" and was the first to shed light on this question by placing the debate in a very special place.

in its true terms: the criteria of truth about Masonic Tradition must be sought in Ancient Freemasonry prior to 1717 and constitute the only way to put "Ordo ab Chao" in the prevailing dis-orientation.

Item 9. About the "Land-Marks" of Traditional Freemasonry:

1) The Almighty, in His aspect as the Great Architect of the Universe, is metaphysical and spiritual Principle that enables the manifestation of Universal Construction and the corresponding Masonic initiation in this world.

2) The initiation of the builders (Freemasons) has a supra-human origin, and is therefore outside history and not the result of human invention.

3) The Filiation of the initiatory chain of Freemasonry is embodied in the Master Masons gathered in Lodge, its Doctrine is set forth in the symbolism of the Temple and its Method of Spiritual Realisation consists in the ritual invocation of the Name of the Great Architect of the Universe.

4) Freemasonry - which is Geometry - necessarily implies the practice of a spiritual and material Operative Science based on a figurative and geometrical Art, expressed through the mute language of symbols.

5) The Book of the Holy Scriptures (V.L.S.), the Compass and the Square are the Three Great Lights of Freemasonry and symbolise, respectively, the Revelation of the Almighty, Heaven and Earth, and should preside centrally over every regular Meeting.

6) The fons et origo of Masonic regularity lies in the Old Charges of Operative Masonry, both in their spiritual and material aspects.

7) The authority and power of Freemasonry resides in the Master Masons who found the Lodges and possess the ability to transmit Masonic initiation. The Mallet is the symbol of the exercise of Masonic authority and power.

8) The Lodge is the natural and regular meeting place for Masons to carry out their Work.

9) The Lodges of the High Degrees of Perfection are led by three Grand Masters Masons representing respectively King Solomon, King Hiram of Tyre and Hiram Abbi, the builder. The Lodges of the Symbolic Degrees are led by a Worshipful Master of the Lodge, a First Warden and a Second Warden.

10) Before commencing their Work, Lodges should verify the safety of the Meeting and the Masonic qualifications of all present.

11) Unknown Masons applying for Work must be tested by Re-teaching, which implies perfect knowledge of the secret Modes of Recognition.

12) The Masters of an already established Lodge, upon the formal request of at three (3) duly qualified Masters of proven material solvency, may issue to them a copy of one of the Old Charges to regularise the elevation of the Columns of a new Lodge, the former becoming the Mother Lodge of the latter.

13) The apron, together with the gloves, is the "garment of the

Mason", and its use in Tenida is indispensable.

14) Every Candidate for Masonic initiation must be a healthy, free individual good morals.

Item 10. Chronology of Scottish Templarism and the Royal Order of Heredom of Kilwinning:

- year 1112: Hughes de Payens, founder of the Order of the Temple, visits the Holy Land with a letter of introduction from Count Henri de Champagne to Baldwin, King of Jerusalem.

- year 1113: Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) was born near Martiney, where Hughes de Payens was the feudal lord and whose title he had obtained from Saint Bernard's uncle, the Count of Champagne. In 1113 he became a monk in the Cistercian Order in the monastery of Citeaux, a small village south of Dijon.

- year 1115: Saint Bernard became the abbot of the monastery of Clairvaux. Under his rule the monastery became the most prominent of the Cistercian Order. His eloquent preaching and certain events that were described as miracles attracted numerous pilgrims. Between 1130 and 1153 more than 90 monasteries were founded under the auspices of Clairvaux and the influence of Saint Bernard on the Church grew throughout Europe.

- 1118: The Order of the Temple is founded to protect the pilgrimage routes to the Holy Land, on the initiative of Hughes de Payens. King Baldwin II granted them land on the site of Solomon's Temple to establish their quarters there. From this fact comes the name Templars; their secular lord was the Count of Champagne and their spiritual master was Saint Bernard, who founded 350 convents.

- year 1120: Rise of the House of Champagne.

- year 1128: Hughes de Payens visits Scotland. The headquarters of the Scottish Templars is established at Balantrodoch, in the lands of the Saint-Clairs (Sinclairs), by a legacy from King David I, which was repeatedly confirmed by successive Scottish kings.

- year 1129: The Council of Troyes meets under the guidance of Saint Bernard.

- year 1136: Establishment of the Cistercian abbey of Melrose (Scotland).

- year 1137: Foundation of a Lodge of Operative Masons to work Melrose Abbey, with a seat at St. John Lane (Newstead).
- year 1140: Founding of Newbattle Abbey in Midlothian (Scotland), four miles from Balantrodoch.
- year 1147: Pope Eugene III authorises the use of the gules cross on the white capes of the Templars.
- year 1153: Death of Saint Bernard, which is commemorated on 20 August.
- year 1154: The sovereign authority of the Grand Master of the Templars is recognised by Louis VII of France.
- year 1187: Jerusalem falls and is lost to the Christians.
- year 1203, April 6: Sack of Constantinople. Important relics fall into Templar hands including the Mandylion (Holy Shroud). The nobles of the Orkney Islands (Orkney) and the Templar families of Scotland, including the Sinclairs, join the Crusades.
- year 1265: The Templars establish the law of gold and silver for the weight of coins throughout Europe. Even today the Templar cross can still be seen British coinage used as a proof mark.
- year 1274: Robert the Bruce, future king and liberator of Scotland, is born. Founder of the Orders of St Andrew of the Thistle and Heredom of Kilwinning.
- year 1291: With the fall of St. John of Acre, the Templars found themselves far from the Holy Land and without the support of the Pope and the European kings.
- year 1297: Battle of Stirling Bridge. The Scottish militia William Wallace defeats the far superior English forces. The House of Champagne declines.
- year 1298: Battle of Falkirk. The English Templar Preceptor Brian le Jay is killed by Scottish archers while fighting for the English King Edward I, in flagrant violation of the Rule of the Temple. The treachery of some Scottish lords causes William Wallace and his militia to be defeated.
- year 1303: In the little-known Battle of Roslin, 8,000 Scots defeat the 30,000 British in three engagements on the same day at the triple command of Sir Simon Fraser, Sinclair of Roslyn and Red Comyn. At the time, Robert the Bruce was in Ireland.

- year 1306, 27th March: Robert the Bruce is crowned King of Scotland at Scone. On the authentic Stone of Destiny which was brought by the Abbot of Scone, the traditional custodian of the Stone of Destiny.

- year 1307, 12th October: Templar ships, under the command of the Admiral of the fleet, set sail at midnight from the port of La Rochelle.

- year 1307, 13th October: During the early hours of Black Friday, the Grand Master Jacques de Molay and the French knights are arrested by Philip the Fair.

- year 1310, 12th May: 54 Templars are executed at the stake. In total 115 Knights of the Temple are executed in France in this way without real evidence of guilt.

- year 1311: Adam of Middleton, Templar Preceptor of Scotland, is received by Bishop Lamberton of St Andrews who grants him protection for the Order.

- year 1312, 3rd April: On unproven charges the Order of the Temple is dissolved by papal decree in Vienne, near Lyon, by Clement V under pressure from Philip the Fair. The Templars suffer cruel persecution in mainland Europe but not in Scotland where the Knights fleeing France find refuge under the then excommunicated King Robert the Bruce, who welcomes them into a divided and contested country.

- year 1314, 18th March: Grand Master Jacques de Molay and the Preceptor of Normandy Godfrey de Charnay are executed at the stake on an island in the Seine.

- year 1314, 24th June: The Knights Templar fight alongside Robert the Bruce at the Battle of Bannock-Burn, the summer solstice in the Northern Hemisphere and the feast of St John. To reward them, King Robert the Bruce founds the Orders of St Andrew of the Thistle and of Heredom (later called "of Kilwinning") and grants them lands in Argyllshire, near Sadell Abbey. Part of the Templar fleet joined the fleet of the Lords of the Isles and the other part joined the northern fleet belonging to the Sinclair clan. Balanrodoch, headquarters of the Scottish Templars, is once again under the protection of the Sinclair clan of Rosslyn.

- 1320: Signing of the Declaration of Arbroath, strongly influenced by Templarism, whereby Scotland ends its servitude to England. The Sinclair clan is a signatory to the Declaration of Independence.

- year 1328, February: The Scots and the kings of England sign the Treaty of Edinburgh in which Scottish sovereignty is recognised. It is subsequently ratified by the Treaty of Northampton in October 1328.

- year 1329: Robert the Bruce dies and is buried in Dunferline Abbey using a Templar Ritual.

- year 1329: A group of Scottish knights and some Templars, under the command of Sir James Douglas, take Bruce's heart to the Holy Land.

Prior to this, they make a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela and take part in the first great successful battle against the Moors at Teba (Calatrava). From this event came the name "Brave Heart" when Sir Douglas threw the little silver box, in which was Bruce's heart, against the Moorish lines and exclaimed: "Go, Brave Heart, we will follow you! Out of twenty-two knights only four survived. Two Sinclairs of Rosslyn died along with the Douglasses. Sir Hay returned to Scotland with Bruce's heart accompanied by a surviving Douglas; the name was later changed to Lockhart.

- year 1331: Henry de Saint-Clair, who fought at the Battle of Bannock-Burn, is buried at Rosslyn as Grand Master Templar.

- year 1333: Battle of Halidon Hill. The Templar knight Adam de Vipont is captured by Edward III and the relic of the Holy Cross (Holy Rood) is lost to the Scots and is kept in Durham Cathedral.

- year 1333, 26th July: A group of French Templars, exiled in Scotland, secretly return to France... They meet in the Hall of Honour of the Templar Commandery in Montfort-sur-Argens and reorganise the Supreme Council of the Elder Brothers of the Rose+Cross (Freres Aïnés de la Rose+Croix).

- year 1334: David II, King of Scotland in exile at the French court, creates the "Garde d'Ecosse" (Scots Guard) as a personal guard for the kings of France, by virtue of the Scottish allegiance. This was a time when there were two kings of Scotland: David, the second of Bruce's sons, and Alexander Comyn, who had sworn allegiance to the English King Edward III. The Auld Alliance was instituted between France and Scotland. Templarism is kept secret in the main Scottish noble houses: the Bruce lineage heir to the Order of the Temple and its traditions.

- year 1398: Earl Henry Sinclair travels from the Orkney Islands (Orkney) to Nova Scotia using sea charts and ships that belonged to the Templar fleet. On his death he is buried as Grand Master of the Templars.

- year 1431: Count William Sinclair is initiated as a Knight in the Orders of the Golden Fleece and Santiago de la Espada (Compostela), where two of his great-uncles had travelled with the heart of King Robert the Bruce.

- year 1445: Earl William Sinclair began to build the Rosslyn Chapel in order to perpetuate certain secret traditions of Scottish Masonic Templarism. The Chapel was built according to the Golden Canon and constitutes a true Stone Book containing the memory of the Scottish Templar Heritage (Heredom=Heirdom). The Order of the Temple was never proscribed in Scotland: its lands were administered by the Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem, but ownership of them never passed to them. The principality of Drem is created. The Garde d'Ecosse still recruits its members from the Scottish Templar clans.

- 1640: The last Grand Master and administrator James Sandilands dissolves, for his own benefit, the inheritance of the lands used by the Hospitallers with the permission of Mary, Queen of Scots.

- 1650: After the burial of Earl William Sinclair, killed at the Battle of Dunbar, the vault of Rosslyn Chapel is sealed.

- year 1688: Establishment of the first Jacobite Masonic Lodge in France, during the reign of Charles II.

- year 1689, 27th July: James Grahame of Claverhouse, Viscount of Dundee, dies at the Battle of Killiecrankie wearing the Grand Cross of the Scottish Order of the Temple.

- 1705: New General Statutes and Charter of Election of Order were drawn up at the General Convent in Versailles, under the protection of the French crown.

- year 1738: The Speech of the Scottish Knight-Mason Andrew Ramsay is read in the French Lodges where the famous phrase appears: "Our ancestors, the Crusaders...".

- year 1742: Lord Kilmarnock, the Knight of the Red Feather (Eques a Penna Rubra) and other Jacobite and Templar exiles initiate Baron Karl von Hund into the rites of Scottish Hereditary (Heredom) Masonic Templarism. The Incognito Superiors are referred to as the Secret Masters of the Jacobites and protectors of the Scottish Templar Heritage. The Sinclair clan plays a predominant role in the guardianship of the Scottish Templar Masonic tradition.

- year 1745, 24th September: Prince Charles-Edward (Stuart), Lord of the Temple, gives a soiree for the Scottish Knighthood of the Templar Heritage at the royal palace of Holy Rood (Holy Cross), recorded in a letter from the Duke of Perth to Lord Ogilvie.

- year 1746, 16th April: The armies of Jacobite Scotland are defeated in the terrible battle of Culloden-Moor. A bloody massacre and persecution ensues, sparing neither children, old men nor women in the surrounding villages. Scottish Templar Heredom Masonry is decimated and its Grand Masters are executed.

- year 1746, December 8th: Sir Charles Radclyffe, Lord of Derwent-Water, and Grand Master of Templar Heritage Jacobite Freemasonry, is beheaded in the Tower of London after being taken prisoner at the Battle of Culloden.

- Year 1747, 15th April: Charles-Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender to the throne, founds in the French town of Arras the so-called Primordial Chapter of the Rose+Cross of Heredom under the title of "Ecosse Jacobite". Thus, the Templar Freemasonry of Heredom is no longer exclusively Scottish by blood and spreads throughout France and from there to the rest of the world.

- year 1754: Conclave at the Jesuit College of Clermont (France) where both fathers of the Society and the survivors of Scottish Templarism and Heredom's Freemasonry met. This gave rise to the ephemeral Masonic Rite of Clermont, which later gave rise to various Masonic Obediences, which have also disappeared.

- year 1760: Secret reorganisation of Heredom Templar Freemasonry in Edinburgh.

- year 11786, 1st May: The Royal Grand Lodge, Edinburgh, grants a Letter Patent for France in the name of Monsieur Jean Matheus as Grand Master, with headquarters in Rouen.

- year 1790: The Royal Order of Heredom of Kilwinning is established in Santo Domingo (Central America). The Grand Master is Achille Huet de Lachelle.

- year 1796: In Scotland, Alexander Deuchar becomes heir to a line of the Templar-Jacobean legacy.

- year 1797: Achille Huet de Lachelle arrives in the United States and grants Letters Patent to the Rose+Cross Chapters of Heredom entitled "The Triple Union" and "Les Amis Choisis" and to the Lodge "L'Union Francaise".

- year 1806, 25th October: Jean-Jacques Regis de Cambaceres, Archduke of the Empire and author of the Napoleonic Civil Code, becomes Grand Master for France of the Royal Order of Heredom of Kilwinning. His son Antoine (1801-1871) was a lawyer and was induced by the patriot Juan Larrea to settle in Argentina. Initiated as a Freemason in France, he joined the Concordia Lodge in 1853. He had two Argentine sons: Antonino C. (1833-1888) and Eugenio (1843-1888), both were Masons initiated in the Argentinean Lodge "Unión del Plata" No. 1. The former held various public offices in the nascent city of La Plata.

- year 1807, January: Alexander Deuchar convenes a Templar conclave in Edinburgh.

- year 1807: Claude-Antoine Thory is installed as Illustrious Master of the Chapter "Rose+Croix du Choix" of the Royal Order of Heredom of Kilwinning, in the city of Paris.

- year 1808, 28th March: Abbot Clovet pronounces a funeral oration for the martyrs of the Order of the Temple in the church of Saint-Paul in Paris.

- year 1810: Alexander Deuchar became Grand Master of the Militia Templi Scotia and heir to the Stuart lineage of Templarism. He retained this position until 1835.

- During the 19th and 20th centuries Scottish Masonic Templarism spread throughout the world with varying fortunes. The same name was not always used to perpetuate the initiatory affiliations, which is why it is extremely complex to trace the formation of the Rose+Cross Chapters of Heredom of

Kilwinning in the various known Masonic Rites and Obediences. However, every regularly established Rose+Cross Chapter is a continuator of the Order of Heredom on condition that the original Rituals (18th century) and the Ancient Customs are strictly observed.

- 1985/90: In Buenos Aires, preparatory work is carried out to erect the Columns of the Order of Heredom.

- year 1992: Establishment of the Grand Chapter for South America of the Royal Order of Heredom of Kilwinning.

Item 11. About the traditional legend of Mount Heredom:

According to the traditional legend of ancient Heredom Freemasonry, the original seat of the Order was in a medieval castle built on the summit of Mount Heredom, which was situated in the North-East quadrant of Scotland. Since the name was not recorded in modern Scottish planimetry, positivist critics immediately placed this oral tradition in the realm of the fantastic and doubtful. However, the traditional interpretation states that this would not be the first time that any area, geographical feature or city had a public name and one or two secret names; two such examples would be the city of Rome which had - and has - three names, one public and two secret, and also Mount Abiegnus of the Rosicrucian tradition had a secret location because outwardly it was known publicly by its profane name.

This question, evidently, can only be resolved by separating the planes of Sacred Geography from profane geography, and in the plane of the former we must remember that Bro. René Guénon pointed out that Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerick, in her visions and revelations, placed the mysterious Mountain of the Prophets also in the North-East quadrant of the world....

But what does it mean when profane geography begins to be reabsorbed into Sacred Geography? Indeed, recent archaeological surveys in vicinity of the Scottish town of Kilwinning, in the north-eastern quadrant of the town in the Irvine County area, have revealed the ruins of an ancient fortified church built on top of an elevation whose slopes have been softened by time. Today, the hill is covered by the Benslee Forest. The outline of the hill, seen from above, shows a perfect Celtic cross, i.e. an equal-armed cross inscribed in a circle with the remains of the church in the centre determined by the intersection of the two arms of the cross. This arrangement may have been discovered by studying an old map drawn by General Roy (CIRCA 1750-55) at the request of the Duke of Cumberland, the butcher of Culloden, after the Jacobite Rebellion of 1746. Br.*. René Guénon had already warned of the unmistakability of certain signs, among which is the reappearance of vestiges of epochs that were supposed to have disappeared...

The above Instructions were given on the summit of Mount Heredom, in the Valley of the city of Buenos Aires (Argentina), between June 24, 5995 V.*. L.*, Feast of St. John of Winter in the Southern Hemisphere, and the 8th of December 6000 V.*. L.*, the anniversary of the execution in the Tower of London of the Grand Master of Jacobite Masonry Sir Charles Radcliffe, Lord of Derwent-Water.

HERMETIC TRADITION AND FREEMASONRY

FEDERICO GONZALEZ

In the ancient Masonic manuscript Cooke, (circa 1400) in the British Library, we read in paragraphs 281-326 that all antediluvian wisdom was written on two great columns. After Noah's flood, one of them was discovered by Pythagoras, the other by Hermes the Philosopher, both of whom devoted themselves to teaching the texts recorded there. This is in perfect agreement with what is attested by an Egyptian legend, of which Manethon - according to Cooke himself - also related to Hermes.

It is obvious that these columns, or obelisks, assimilated to the J. and B. pillars, are the ones that support the Masonic temple - and at the same time allow access to it. are those that support the Masonic temple - and at the same time allow access to it - and configure the two great sapiential tributaries that will nourish the Order: Hermeticism, which will ensure the protection of the god through Philosophy, that is to say, Knowledge, and Pythagoreanism, which will provide the necessary arithmetical and geometrical elements, which the constructive symbolism demands; both currents must be considered to be directly or indirectly of Egyptian origin. Equally that these two columns are the legs of the Mother Lodge, by which the Neophyte is brought forth, that is to say by the wisdom of Hermes, the great initiator, and by Pythagoras the Gnostic instructor.

In fact, in the oldest published Masonic Constitution, Roberts' Constitution published in England in 1722 (thus predating Anderson's), but which is nothing more than the codification of ancient operative usages and customs deriving from the Middle Ages, and to be developed later in speculative Freemasonry, Hermes is specifically mentioned, in the part called "History of the Freemasons". Indeed, there he appears in the Masonic genealogy under that name and also under the name of the Great Hermarmes, son of Shem and grandson of Noah, who after the flood found the aforementioned stone pillars where the antediluvian (Atlantean) wisdom was inscribed and reads (deciphers) on one of them what he will later teach men. The other pillar, as mentioned, was interpreted by Pythagoras as the father of Arithmetic and Geometry, essential elements in the structure of the lodge, and therefore both characters form, as we have seen, the "alma mater" of the Order, particularly in its operative aspect, linked to the Liberal Arts.

In the manuscript Grand Lodge no. 1 (1583) only the column of Hermes survives, rediscovered by "the Great Hermarmes" (who is said to be a descendant of Shem) "who was later called Hermes, the father of wisdom". Note that Pythagoras is no longer listed as the interpreter of the other column. In the Dumfries manuscript no. 4 (c. 1710) he also appears, as "the great Hermorian", "who was called 'the father of wisdom' ", but, in this case, his origin has been rectified in accordance with the biblical text which makes him a descendant of Ham and not of Shem, through Kush; as J.-F. Var in *La franc-maçonnerie: documents fondateurs*, Ed.

L'Herne, p. 207, n. 33: "Now, in Genesis (10, 6-8), Kush is the son of Ham and not of Shem. The editor of the Dumfries has consequently rectified the filiation. At the same time, this filiation turns out to be that which Scripture gives of Nimrod. Hence the assimilation of Hermes with Nemrod, contrary to other versions which make them two distinct personages".

This is also emphasised by the manuscript called Regius discovered by Haliwell in the British Museum in 1840 and reproduced by J.G. Findel in the General History of Freemasonry (1861), in its extensive first part dealing with origins up to 1717. Findel in the General History of Freemasonry (1861), in its extensive first part dealing with the origins up to 1717, although it does not include Pythagoras as the hermeneut who, together with Hermes, deciphers the mysteries which the Masons will inherit, but Euclid, who is made the son of Abraham; in this respect it should be remembered that Pythagoras' right triangle theorem was stated Euclid's forty-seventh proposition.

Findel himself, referring to the number of Gnostic and operative elements which constitute Freemasonry, and specifically dealing with the German stonemasons, states: "If the conformity which results between the social organism, the usages and teachings of Freemasonry and those of the companies of Freemasons of the Middle Ages already indicates the existence of historical relations between these various institutions, the results of researches made in the arcana of history and the concurrence of a multitude of irrecusable circumstances positively establish that the Society of Freemasons descends, directly and immediately, from those companies of Freemasons of the Middle Ages." And he adds, "the history of Freemasonry and of the Society of Freemasons is therefore intimately linked to that of the corporations of Freemasons and to the history of the art of building in the Middle Ages; it is therefore indispensable to take a quick glance at this history in order to arrive at the one that concerns us."

The interesting thing about these references from Germany is that his General History? is considered to be the first history (in the modern sense of the term) of Freemasonry, and from the outset the author states that: "the history of Freemasonry, like the history of the world, has its basis in tradition".¹ It is therefore obvious that the Ancient Usages and Customs, the symbols and rites and secrets of the Craft, have been handed down unbroken from time immemorial - and certainly in the medieval guilds - and the passage from the operative to the speculative has been but the adaptation of transcendent truths to new cyclical circumstances, noting that the term operative refers not only to the physical work or construction, projection or material and professional planning of the works, but also to the possibility for Freemasonry to operate in the initiate Knowledge, by means of the tools provided by Sacred Science, its symbols and rites. This is precisely what Freemasonry as an Initiatory Organisation seeks, and this is confirmed by the continuity of the traditional passage, which means that in speculative Freemasonry one can also find, in a reflex way, the operative virtue and communication with the Celestial Lodge, that is, the reception of its effluvium, which is what guarantees any true initiation, especially when the teachings are emanated from the god Hermes and the wise Pythagoras.² In any case, both are branches of a common trunk that takes the Old Charges as its model, of numerous fragments and manuscripts in scroll form have been found in various libraries since the 14th century.³

As for Hermes - not mentioned in Anderson's constitutions - particularly the Greek Hermes Trismegistus (the Egyptian Thoth), he is as familiar a figure to Freemasonry of the most varied rites and obediences as he might be to the alchemists, forgers of the immense literature placed under his patronage. Not only is Hermeticism the subject of abundant Masonic plates and books, and innumerable lodges are called Hermes, but there are rites and degrees named after him. Thus there is a Rite called the Disciples of Hermes; another the Hermetic Rite of the Scottish Mother Lodge of Avignon (which is not that of Dom Pernety), Philosopher of Hermes is the title of a Degree whose catechism is found in the archives of the "Lodge of the assembled friends of St. Louis", Hermes Trismegistus is another archaic degree of which Ragon, Chevalier, gives us an account.

Hermetic is a hierarchy contained in a manuscript attributed to Brother Peuvret, which also speaks of another called Hermetic Treasury, corresponding to the 148th degree of the nomenclature of the University, where there are others such as Hermetic Philosopher Apprentice, Hermetic Interpreter, Hermetic Grand Chancellor, Hermetic Grand Theosophist (corresponding to the 140th degree), The Great Hermes, etc. Likewise in the Rite of Memphis the 40th degree of the Philosophical series is called Sublime Hermetic Philosopher, and the 77th degree (9th series) of the Metropolitan Chapter is called Hermetic Mason.

Nor is there any lack of direct references to Hermetic Philosophy and the Corpus Hermeticum,⁴ in Masonic journals and dictionaries today, where the latter is fixed, but which include analogies with alchemical terminology; here is just one example taken from the Dictionnaire de la franc- maçonnerie by D. Ligou (p. 577): "We will cite a Hermetic interpretation of certain terms used in Masonic vocabulary: Sulphur (Venerable), Mercury (1st Watcher), Salt (2nd Watcher), Salt (2nd Watcher). Ligou (p. 571): "We shall quote a Hermetic interpretation of certain terms used in the Masonic vocabulary: Sulphur (Venerable), Mercury (1st Watcher), Salt (2nd Watcher), Fire (Speaker), Air (Secretary), Water (Hospitaller), Earth (Treasurer). Here we find the three principles and the four elements of the alchemists".

Hermes and Hermeticism are therefore a common reference in Freemasonry, as are Pythagoras and geometry. On the other hand, both historical currents of thought derive through Greece, Rome and Alexandria, from the most remote Egypt and through them from Atlantis and Hyperborea, as is ultimately the case with every Initiatic Organisation, capable of linking man with his Origin. And it goes without saying that this impressive genealogy, which includes the gods, the wise men (priests) and the kings (both of Tyre and Israel, as well as of Scotland: royalty did not disdain construction and the king was just another operative master) forms a sacred ambit, an inner space built of silence, a place where all virtualities are realised and where the Universal Being can be reflected in a specular way. The Masonic lodge, as we know, is a visible image of the Invisible lodge, as the logos is the unfolding of the Triunity of Principles.

The influence of the god Hermes, and the ideas of the sage Pythagoras have not entirely disappeared from this twilight world we inhabit, indeed they are all that remains of it - let us not forget that the alchemists equate Jesus with the Solar Mercury - in the West at least. On the other hand, the world could not even be without them, both in the aspect of the perpetually regenerating energies attributed to Hermes and his Philosophy, and that of the Pythagorean force-ideas, without whose numerical (and geometrical) order no operation is possible today.

Deity is immanent in every being, and the Sons of the Widow, the children of light, re-know it within their own lodge, made in the image and likeness of the Cosmos. The root H. R. M. is common to the names Hermes and Hiram and the latter forms with Solomon a wall where wisdom and possibility (doctrine and method) are united, pointing to the Hebrew Tradition (Kabbalah), in which Jesus was born, as the vehicle of this sapiential, real, and artistic (artisanal) revelation, which constitutes the Sacred Science, which is learned and taught by symbols and rites in the lodge, a coded "book" that the Masters decode today, just as their ancestors did in mythical times, since Freemasonry does not bestow the Knowledge itself but shows the symbols and indicates the ways to access it, with the blessing of the ancestral rites, which act as media transmitters of that Knowledge.⁵

In other words, the actualisation of possibility, that is to say, Being, the verification that everything is alive, that the Present is Eternal, the simultaneity of Time, the idea of the Triunity of the One and Only, make up a Knowledge to which Masons arrive by their own experience, which provides a gradual and hierarchical learning.

The Master Builder carries his inner lodge, he himself is just that, a miniature of the Cosmos, designed by the Great Architect of the Universe. Numbers and geometrical figures symbolise metaphysical and ontological concepts which also represent concrete and immediate human realities, as necessary as physiological activities, and thereafter any others. Number establishes the idea of scale, proportion, and relation; also of rhythm, measure and harmony, since they are the channels that Unity tends towards numerical indefiniteness, towards the four points of the mathematical horizon and multiplicity.

It is obvious that Pythagoras - or Thales of Miletus - did not "invent" anything, but recognised in the decimal series, which returns to its Origin ($10 = 1 + 0 = 1$), a natural scale, an accessis, which would allow the human being to complete the Work and thus transmute into the True Man, the paradigm of every Initiate, located in the Middle Chamber, between the square and the compass.⁶ There has been no Tradition that has not developed a numerical system to serve as a method of knowledge, in perfect correspondence with the creative patterns. Let us remember that the roof of the lodge is decorated by the stars, the Rulers, who govern the celestial spheres and establish the intervals and measures of Universal Harmony.

Yet the Masons have never failed to recognise the Gospel saying: "In my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14, 2), for although they know that they have a path open before them which will lead them to their Father, they do not deny other paths or oppose any way, for they think that the invisible structures are the same, prototypes valid for all times and places, despite the constant adaptation of different forms suitable for different individualities, Mostly determined by the cycles of time - as could be exemplified by any living organism, including the human being and his modifications and adaptations over the years - cycles to which Freemasonry is no stranger either, as can be seen in its gradual transformation, which finally took shape in the 18th century. And it is because of this same understanding of its metaphysical and initiatory possibilities that Freemasonry recognises other Traditions, and also leaves open the exercise of any religious or pseudo-religious beliefs among its members, many of whom reconcile their process of Knowledge, read Initiation, with the practice of exoteric and legal religious precepts and ceremonies, which they think might enrich their passage - and that of others - through this world. There is therefore no conflict between Freemasonry and Religion, as long as there is no attempt to conflate the concepts, or - as has already happened - to allow certain fundamentalists (religious or otherwise) to try to take over the lodges for their own personal gain. In fact, numerous Hermetists, Pythagoreans and Freemasons have been, and are, accomplished Christians, or great Kabbalists, and all of them have had the symbols as their teachers. The Catholic Church has never condemned Hermeticism, nor Euclid - heir to the Pythagorean geometrical science, and master of the Masons - but it has had problems with Freemasonry since the 18th century to the point of condemning it and excommunicating its members. In recent times, however, there has been a gradual rapprochement between the two institutions, punctuated here and there by misunderstandings and interference, often self-interested. According to José A. Ferrer Benimelli, S. J., the magazine *Civiltà Cattolica* of Rome, which appeared in 1852 and which has followed the

The evolution of the subject of Freemasonry up to the present day marks this process of rapprochement or at least mutual respect. Indeed, the first articles are violent and condemnatory, there is a period of transition, and those of the last few years are quite conciliatory and open to dialogue.⁷

Numerous Catholic Freemasons, many of them French, have tried for years to reconcile the two institutions and lift the excommunication; However, there are many other Masonic authors who fully integrate the Hermetic Tradition with their Order without the need for religious exotericism, such as Oswald Wirth, director for many years of the journal *le Symbolisme* and a renowned Mason who has written on the Symbols of the Hermetic Tradition and Masonic Symbols, *El Simbolismo Hermético en sus relaciones con la Alquimia y la Masonería*, Saros, Bs. As. 1958 (see here p. 394), showing many aspects of his identity of Origin; as for Masons who have published in recent years, both on the different degrees and on Numbers, we would like to mention first of all Raoul Berteaux, among a large group who have dealt extensively with Arithmosophy, which has a Pythagorean basis.⁸

Hermes, to whom the teaching of all the sciences is attributed, has enjoyed great prestige throughout different periods in the history of Western culture. This has been true of the alchemists and the so-called Hermetic philosophers, and these same ideas have manifested themselves in the Order of the Rosicrucian Brothers, all influences which have been taken up by Freemasonry to such an extent that it can be considered as a repository of Pythagorean wisdom and its transmitter in recent centuries, as well as a recipient of the Alchemical Principles, and also of Rosicrucian ideas,⁹ which is evident when we see at a glance that one of the highest degrees in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the 18th, is called precisely the Rosicrucian Prince. Analogies and connections with the Orders of Chivalry are also claimed by some Freemasons, specifically with the Order of the Temple. There are many historical clues that would show these seeds, also traditions and rites, especially one of the words of passage in the 33rd degree, but they are rather diminished when one remembers that the Templars were both monks and soldiers (albeit great medieval builders), This has no apparent connection with Freemasonry, where, on the other hand, there is a very clear Hebraic influence which we have already noted in the case of Solomon and the Building of the Temple, and which is confirmed by the simple observation that almost all the words of the pass and degree, sacred secrets, are pronounced in Hebrew.¹⁰

In the Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Freemasonry (Ed. del Valle de México, México D. F.), perhaps the best known in Spanish, under the title "Hermes" we find the corresponding entry, where we can appreciate the importance attributed to the Corpus Hermeticum which, in some South American lodges, takes the place of the Bible as a sacred book. The relationship between Hermes and silence is well known, and that which is perfectly closed, or sealed, is usually called hermetic. Silence is also characteristic of Freemasonry and also of the Pythagoreans, who spent five years cultivating it.

Elias Ashmole is also a good point of confluence between Hermeticism and Freemasonry. This extraordinary character, born in lichfield, England, in 1617, seems to have played an important role in the transition between ancient Freemasonry before Anderson-Desaguliers and its later historical projection, aimed at rescuing most of the spiritual-intellectual, i.e. gnostic (in the etymological sense of the term), message of the authentic initiatory organisations, including Freemasonry and the Order of the Garter. He was received into the Warrington Lodge on 16-10-1646, although according to his

He did not attend his second appointment until many years later. However, we should not be surprised by this behaviour in an individuality such as his, a product of the atmosphere of the time, where the cult of secrecy and mystery was commonplace for obvious reasons of security and prudence. In 1650 he published his *Fasciculus Chemicus* under the anagrammatic name of James Hasolle; it was a translation of Latin texts on alchemy (including those of Jean d'Espagnet), with his introduction. In 1652 he published *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, a collection of English alchemical texts in verse, which brought together many of the most important pieces produced in that country, and six years later *The Way to Bliss*, while at the same time working on literary documentary research as a historian, and developing his antiquarian activity by bringing together in a museum all kinds of "curiosities" and "rarities" related to archaeology and ethnology, as well as collections of Natural History, including all kinds of mineral, botanical and zoological species. The latter was in fact the scientific purpose of the museum (where even the first chemical experiments in England were carried out), which today is visited in its magnificent premises in Oxford, more as an art museum than as a precursor institution of science and auxiliary to the University. Ashmole's life has been closely linked to that of Oxford, and the funds from his donations of objects and manuscripts to the institution of his name (which also contains his diaries written in a cipher system and containing numerous notes on Freemasonry)¹¹ have been extremely important for that city, given its university prestige. At Oxford and also in London Ashmole played a very prominent role; a child of his time, he devoted himself to natural and experimental science as a form of the magic of transmutations, like many Hermetic philosophers. In this sense he dealt with Astrologers, Alchemists, Mathematicians and all kinds of wise men and dignitaries of the time, together with whom he formed the Royal Society of London and the Philosophical Society of Oxford. His numerous friends and lifelong companions are names of great importance, many of them linked to Freemasonry in its highest degrees, such as Christopher Wren, or to the research and practice of the Liberal Arts and Sacred Science, who formed a group of personalities who played a fundamental role in their time, specifically in the dissemination and practice of the Hermetic Tradition and in its relationship with Freemasonry. As René Guénon has said of Ashmole's role: "We even think that, in the 17th century, he sought to reconstitute in this respect a tradition of which a large part had already been lost". In this extraordinary work, the name of E. Ashmole shines out in two respects: as one of the reconstructors of Freemasonry in terms of its relationship with the orders of Chivalry and the guilds of builders, and also as a point of confluence with the Hermetic Tradition. Ashmole himself called himself the son of Mercury (*Mercuriophilus Anglicus*), and his most important work, the aforementioned *The Way to Bliss*, 1658, records his studies in Hermetic Philosophy, as he indicates in his introduction to the reader.

It should also be noted that some authors make much of certain issues relating to Catholicism and Protestantism in the process of the transition from operative to speculative Freemasonry. In fact it is often simplified to say that the operative corporations were Catholic and the later speculative ones Protestant. Of course, from a historical point of view, these facts may be more or less "real", since the Order, like any institution, is subject to certain cyclical ups and downs that have social, political, economic, etc. manifestations. But from the point of view of Freemasonry as an initiatory organisation, it is not subject to becoming, which is why it will subsist until the end of the cycle.¹² In reality, the Hermetic Tradition (and Hermes himself) has undergone innumerable adaptations over time, although it has never ceased to express itself, and it is obvious that this Tradition, like the foundations of Freemasonry, identified with the Science of Building, predates Christianity, although it has coexisted with it for twenty centuries and has even produced Christian and Christian Hermeticists.

Hermeticism (among the latter, dignitaries of the highest level, including popes), which does not prevent this Tradition from having a clearly pagan background, related to the schools of mysteries, or as they are called today, mystic religions; therefore it could be asserted that Hermeticism has a pagan and a Christian side. In this sense we must make it clear that the word pagan sounds to our ears, accustomed to the most superficial of the Abrahamic religions, like an accursed, illegal, bastard, or at least a nebulous sin. It also sounds like ignorance attributed to the backwardness of peoples who are unknown or even uninteresting. Paganism is usually understood as something at odds with civilised opinion, extremely primitive, or against Christianity, or religion, and therefore out of order. In short, paganism is previously eliminated by inner censure as something a little repugnant, before we learn that it is in fact only the wisdom of undefined traditional peoples who have populated this world before - and during - the mere twenty centuries that characterise the so-called contemporary Civilisation.¹³

We assume that from this latter, almost officially ecumenical point of , there is nothing offensive in sharing pagan thought, as has been seen from the Fathers of the Church to numerous contemporary scholars, priests and pastors.¹⁴

Indeed, for Hermeticism, which historically predates Christianity, there is a Perennial Cosmogony, manifested in its philosophy and writings, as for the Mason - religious or not - it is in its symbols and rites.

With regard to the relationship between the Freemasons and the guilds of builders and craftsmen, there are three major testimonies widely cited as documentary sources on the practice of building in the Middle Ages.¹⁵ Nicolás Coldstream gathers them in his book on crafts in the Middle Ages,¹⁶ where he rejects the idea of the "ghostly" affiliation of Freemasonry with the medieval builders and craftsmen (his simple thesis is that the Masons were workers and not cabinet people), although paradoxically his study confirms this in different ways; thus, referring to the subject, he says: "This is the document, written by Abbot Suger, which relates the construction of the new choir of the abbey of Saint-Denis; the manuscript, dated circa 1200, of the monk Gervais of Canterbury, on the fire and repair of Canterbury Cathedral; and the Album of Villard de Honnecourt, a collection of drawings and plans of buildings, mouldings and elevator lathes. Of the three, Suger's text tells us more about the man and the decoration of his church than about the building, although he makes, in passing, some precious allusions to its construction. Close examination of Villard de Honnecourt's Album allows us to doubt seriously that he had ever built churches and that he had any knowledge of architecture; as for his drawings, although interesting, they would not be those of an architect or those of a mason's workshop. The Gervais text, on the other hand, is the only medieval document that describes a team of masons at work; it provides a great deal of information on the practice of the masons and certain methods of construction".

We are particularly interested in the reference to Villard de Honnecourt's Album. Indeed, it is not the first time that certain features are pointed out about the fact that this notebook is not a manual of applied technology, but something else entirely, much more closely linked to the approaches of Hermetic philosophy that are written down for the use of master builders.¹⁷ And the fact that such a document (more of a cabinet than anything else) exists is proof that the speculation about symbolism and Hermetic language in its

The Christian version was already being cultivated at the beginning of the 13th century, which saw the birth of the cathedrals of Chartres and Reims, among others.

Much has been written on this subject and the debate remains open; the researcher will draw his own conclusions, but he cannot ignore the oral Tradition, and its universal affiliation with Constructive Symbolism, which can manifest itself in the Far East, as well as in Egypt or Mesoamerica; in the Roman "collegia fabrorum", or in the medieval corporations, which are usually considered to be

The "craft" of the Freemasons - leaving aside any initiatory reference or any reference to the Freemasons - as closed and at the same time as a repository of knowledge relating to the "craft", which was transmitted by symbols and terms of a coded language.

It should be noted, however, that the influence of the Hermetic Philosophy on the one hand, and on the other that of the Christian building guilds (and some others already mentioned, such as the Order of the Temple), is uneven in the various Rites, where, on a common background, some affiliations inclined towards one or other aspect are discernible. We cannot deal here with the complex and lengthy subject of the diversity of the Masonic Rites, but can point out its existence, and also that of different aspects of Sacred Science which provoke in some a greater or lesser sympathy. Since Freemasonry is one, as is Cosmic Construction, and therefore Constructive Symbolism, the interpenetrations of different influences, their oppositions and conjunctions, are part of the interplay of imbalances and adaptations to which the Masonic legacy, conveyed by the Judeo-Christian civilisation, has been forced. This has also been the case in the past and explains the transition from operative to speculative Masonry, as we have already mentioned, a gradual process, to the extent that certain "operative" lodges (prior to 1717) had "speculative" elements and that many "speculative" lodges (today) are properly operative. There are even documents attesting to the coexistence of the two, a subject which has been expressly referred to by various authors as Transitional Masonry.¹⁸

Indeed, after the publication of Anderson's Constitutions a very large group of Masons, Scottish, Irish and from other parts of England decide to dissociate themselves from the Grand Lodge founded in London (and which started with only four lodges), their differences being in part related to certain alterations of meaning - even rituals - of which religious distinctions are not unrelated, and even create a sort of Federation of Ancient Freemasonry, which after a few dozen years will again begin to have relations with the English, but maintaining its traditional views more related to the operative or initiatory than to the speculative or allegorical; To this must be added the problems of succession to the throne of England, claimed by the Scottish Catholic James, who had many supporters, not only in the islands but throughout the continent.¹⁹

In any case, this situation of the diversity of Rites is reproduced in the different degrees, which vary in number, name and status, according to the different Masonic forms. This subject is of interest, but it seems to us a priority to remember that these degrees (whether in numbers of three, seven, nine, or more) represent stages in the Process of Knowledge, or Initiation, and that these steps - or states - in Freemasonry are synthesised and designated by the names of Apprentice, Fellow and Master, in correspondence with the three worlds: physical, psychic and spiritual. These three great degrees synthetically contain within themselves all the degrees, which most of the time are but specifications or extensions of them. But it is clear that the division is hierarchical and takes place within a ritual order that corresponds symbolically to these stages

in the Initiation or Way of Knowledge. Yet there is no central power uniting all Freemasonry, although there are enormously powerful Grand Lodges with a traditional past, and the various Obediences and Rites maintain an attitude of mutual respect, in that they are offspring of a common tree.

This sort of independence, if I may say so, is also clear in each lodge, where symbols are or are not realised, and prescribed rites are or are not practised. Masonic Unity is fundamentally produced in the Workshop, a projection of the Cosmos, with freedom from the Obedience to which it belongs.

It remains for us to mention that these three degrees make up what is called Blue or Symbolic Masonry. Above them are the High Degrees, a system of hierarchies which is not considered in certain Obediences, nor accepted by certain Rites. It should also be known that in passing from one degree to another, the degree attained only begins to be realised; thus it is when a Companion receives the degree of Master that initiation into that degree begins. Likewise, the degrees are permanent, and those acquired in a normal Masonic career are never lost.

We have yet to mention a little more of Alchemy as a present influence in the Masonic Order. We have already pointed out that Sulphur, Mercury and Salt, the alchemical principles, are directly incorporated, right from the first degrees.

Alchemy has in common with Freemasonry the inner development, tending towards Perfection, which both the alchemists considered the goal of their endeavours (since Nature had not finished her Work which the Artist or Adept had to complete), and the Masons the ultimate aims of Freemasonry, which include death and consequent regeneration to another level, or state of consciousness.

On the other hand, it is often said among friends of Hermetic-Alchemical Philosophy that the last great Alchemist (and writer on these subjects) was Irenaeus Philaleteus in the seventeenth century. This is quite accurate from one perspective, only it is not clearly realised that from that date onwards this Tradition is not interrupted to the present day, but is transformed, and very many of its teachings and symbols pass into Freemasonry, as the transmitter of the Royal Art and the Sacred Science, both in the three basic degrees and in the hierarchy of the high degrees. According to René Guénon these high degrees are an extension of the study and meditation on the symbols and rites (some of them are called philosophical)²⁰ born out of the interest of many Masons to develop and realise the possibilities granted by Initiation; For this reason, the practical usefulness of these degrees is unquestionable and they constitute the hierarchy that crowns the process of Knowledge, always bearing in mind the initiatory character of the organisation, as the author warns us, who also warns us of the danger of these degrees being devoted to social or political problems, mutable by nature, and therefore far removed from the foundations of the Masonic Temple, built in stone. (See "René Guénon": article "The High Degrees").

In Masonic symbolism - as in Alchemical symbolism - the sun and the moon play a fundamental role and are to be found in such essential places as in the paintings and decorations of the lodges (located in their East). Of course, these are the active and passive principles, which also correspond to the columns Jakin and Boaz, thus indicating the opposition of these energies, as well as their conjunction on an invisible axis on which the Great Architect of the Universe holds the plumb line. While giving primacy to this

In general meaning, the reality of these stars must also be taken into account, since there is a Masonic calendar whose two extreme points constitute - as in almost all Traditions - the summer and winter solstices, the festivals of the two St. Johns, which mark the limit points of the sun in its path, marking also the intermediate points corresponding to the equinoxes on the time wheel, and introduce us to the doctrine of rhythms and cycles. Moreover, there is a pre-eminence between these luminaries, since the moon shines thanks to the sunlight, a concept that is not alien to the Hermetic Tradition - and to the Kabbalah - since both are widely used to indicate degrees of Knowledge, or stages in the initiatory journey. Jean Tourniac, in the prologue to the well-known *Tuileur de Vuillaume*²¹, points out, referring to the cycles, the assimilation of the symbolic moon-sun wall to that of solar and polar symbolism. This association, which has undefined paths of development, could also be related to two aspects of Freemasonry embodied in the mythical figures of Solomon (solar) and Pythagoras (polar), which in turn - and this is not said by Tourniac - would bear some analogy with the symbolic degrees (Blue Freemasonry) and the High , or at least this is supposedly what was intended by those who were instituting the latter.

Literature on Freemasonry, or historical research on the Order, often includes anti-Masonic authors, media and writings - so confusing is the picture about its origins and aims - and a number of parallel "legends" have been created, which makes it difficult for some researchers to cross a kind of "cursed" and invisible border that is due to the "black legends" about Freemasonry - such as those spread by Leo Taxil in France - many of them originating in Catholicism. Another type of criticism, not related to its spiritual content, is based on the political and economic actions of certain lodges which, using the Masonic structure and taking advantage of the independence of the Craft, have profited in this way from the Order and the public, projecting a distorted image of Freemasonry.

Admittedly, this has sometimes been the case, but at the same time it has been the case for years with all institutions, whose decay is evident. In some societies the Order still enjoys the prestige it had in the past, and in certain countries its spiritual strength, as a manager of great enterprises, has left clear traces, which are now being followed. Sometimes there are Masons who still do not know Masonry, or believe it to be something else - more concrete and material - but they are all clear about its motto: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and they fulfil their Rite according to its Ancient Usages and Customs. Had it not been for the coherence and the spiritual-intellectual content, which the symbols and rites manifest, Freemasonry would be just another absurdity and, in any , would not have come down to our days.

Another thing that should be pointed out is the curiosity to know what is the real degree of Knowledge that this or that Mason, or in general, this or that Initiate, has; but who is interested in that? What importance does it have and before whom?

This question, logically, does not fit within the limits of historical research based on documentation, and it is therefore very difficult to establish clear origins and logical sequences in a subject that is not, even if one tries to force it. One of these researchers, the aforementioned J. A. Ferrer Benimelli, who has more than twenty interesting works published on Freemasonry, - and who systematically ignores Hermes - informs us: "Bernardin, in his work *Notes to serve the history of Freemasonry in Nancy up to 1805*, having compiled two hundred and six works dealing with the origins of Freemasonry, found thirty-nine diverse opinions, some as original as those which trace Freemasonry back to the early Christians or to Jesus Christ himself, to Zoroaster, to the Magi or to the Jesuits; not to mention the best known theories - the so-called 'classical' ones - which trace Freemasonry to the

Templars, the Rosicrucians or the Jews" and adds in a note: "Of these thirty-nine authors, twenty-eight have attributed the origins of the F.M. to the mason builders of the Gothic period. to the mason builders of the Gothic period; twenty authors are lost in the most distant antiquity; eighteen place it in Egypt; fifteen go back to the Creation, mentioning the existence of a Masonic lodge in the Earthly Paradise; twelve, to the Templars; eleven, to England; ten, to the first Christians or to the Jews; ten, to the first Christians or to the Jews; ten, to the early Christians or to Jesus Christ himself; nine, to ancient Rome; seven, to the primitive Rosicrucians; six, to Scotland; six others, to the Jews, or to India; five, to the supporters of the Stuarts; five others, to the Jesuits; four, to the Druids; three, to France; the same number are attributed to the Scandinavians: to the Scandinavians, to the builders of Solomon's temple, and to the survivors of the flood; two, to Bacon's 'New Atlantis' society, and to the pretended Tower of Wilwinning [Kilwinning]. Finally, to Sweden, China, Japan, Vienna, Venice, the Magi, Chaldea, the order of the Essenes, the Manichaeans, those who worked on the Tower of Babel, and, lastly, one who asserts that there was M. F. before the creation of the world."

"22

Coat of Arms of the Chapter of the Rose Cross of Heredom of Kilwinning, Paris 1776.

Analogous to the confusion of origins is what happens in the Hermetic Tradition, with the myth of Hermes and Hermes Trismegistus - and with every myth or origin - and indeed with the Corpus Hermeticum, books which, as we have seen above,²³ condense and recall the knowledge of this Tradition. Indeed, Jean-Pierre Mahé, a scholar who - together with Father J.A. Festugière - has devoted his life to the study of these texts, believes that the Armenian fragments of this literature come from the first century before this era, and that the later versions preserved in Greek, Latin and Coptic are derived from them, their content being purely pagan, apart from the Gnostic and Christian influences that have been attributed to them with a certain liberality. It is interesting to note how this scholar, in his most important work on the subject *Hermès en Haute-Egypte*²⁴ where he compares different versions of the Corpus with each other, with other manuscripts found at Nag-Hammadi and with authors of antiquity, etc., comes to the conclusion that they are all related, that they come from a single source, and even have a tone, an air, a common mood, which is also manifested in their style, an opinion that we share. But this knowledge, proper to the Corpus,²⁵ which Mahé sees as solemn, repetitive, contradictory and sententious, in short as bad literature (what is good literature and who is in a position to define it and in relation to what?), seems to us difficult to appreciate with logical parameters, however much effort and work is put into it and despite the extremely valuable contribution made by the establishment of these texts, their translation and commentary, although they are repeatedly seen from a perspective totally alien to that which the texts possess. Hence the danger of approaching things of a certain order with means which, by their nature, are not the right ones, since they themselves are shaped by a series of conditioning factors belonging to the profane world, which even an astonishing erudition does not know how to hide, since they appear here and there in the literalness of the approaches, the childishness of the conceptions, the abysmal disproportion between the sapiential-emotional sense of the text and the "university", that is, profane reading that is made of it.²⁶ An initiatory society should not be treated exclusively for its humanitarian or altruistic actions, as there is a danger of distorting the real reason for its existence.

Another matter which is more or less used as a criticism of both Freemasonry and Hermeticism is their allegedly syncretic character. First of all, we condemn the abuse of this word, which for some is tantamount to disqualification. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Greco-Roman Antiquity, countless archaic Traditions, even Egyptian and Chinese Civilisation, could today be judged as "syncretic" in the light of the most ancient documents, not to mention the idea of a Tradition.

Unanimous, beyond this or that form. Indeed, the term has been in vogue at a time when anthropological research and the history of religions were in their infancy, and there was a belief in the "purity" of certain cultures - a very dangerous concept, moreover, capable of leading to the error of races - as well as religions. Unfortunately, this term has continued to be used, and is used by some as a weapon wielded to condemn what they imagine does not suit them, or escapes their elementary simplifications. Too close is the History of the Church, its Councils and the formation of its Dogmas, its Theology, the History of the Popes, etc., for Christianity to reproach the Hermetic Tradition and Freemasonry with anything in this sense, and this could be generalised to other religions and spiritual influences that make up the Culture of the West. There are innumerable currents that have shaped this Civilisation, most of which, in one way or another, coexist with ourselves, and we should thank God, on behalf of our culture, that these natural interrelationships, which are transferred with human migrations from one people and their language to another, have always existed, despite the acid reproach of syncretism, emanating from supposed authorities based on imaginary outdated structures.

In short, that the various components of Freemasonry do not prevent this adaptation of the Sacred Science, of the Perennial Philosophy, from being entirely Traditional, but rather prove the contrary in so far as they are considered in their doctrines, that is to say: in themselves.

Final

NOTES

1

In the appendix to his History, Findel himself publishes the first available document, dated 1419, on German stonemasons.

2

"It seems to us indisputable that both operational and speculative aspects have always been united in the corporations of the Middle Ages, which used expressions as clearly hermetic as that of the 'Great Work', with different applications, but always analogically corresponding to each other". R. Guénon, *Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie et le Compagnonnage* T. II, chap. "A propos des signes corporatives et de leur sens originel" (see translation). Ed. Traditionnelles, Paris 1986.

3

Encyclopaedia Britannica. Article 'Freemasonry', ed. 1947.

4

See Claude Tannery "le Corpus Hermeticum (Introduction, pour des développements ultérieurs, à l'hermétisme et la maçonnerie)"; n° 12 Villard de Honnecourt magazine, Paris 1986. References to Hermes and the Hermetic-Alchemical Tradition in Masonic literature are very abundant as we have already said; not to mention Pythagoras, a subject that is dealt with in another study in this same issue of V. of H.: Thomas Efthymiou, "Pythagore et sa présence dans la Franc-maçonnerie".

5

See E. Mazet "Eléments de mystique juive et chrétienne dans la franc-maçonnerie de transition (VIe-VIIe s.)"; no. 16, 2nd series, also in the journal *Travaux de la loge nationale de recherches Villard de Honnecourt*. The author has published other equally interesting contributions on documentary aspects of Freemasonry in this journal, which publishes the work of the study lodge of the same name, attached to the Grande Loge Nationale Française. Indeed, this journal, together with the *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, which also publishes the works of a study lodge of the same name (Quatuor Coronati lodge) and which has published more than 80 volumes in England since 1886, are the best sources to be found for the comprehensive study of Freemasonry.

6

The importance of the Pythagorean Tetraktys in any kind of metaphysical and cosmogonic knowledge is well known. On the other hand, the relationship of musical harmonies with respect to numbers, in particular with the scale of the first seven, is also a Pythagorean theme that Freemasonry and the *Corpus Hermeticum* take up in the form of degrees and tokens of recognition linked to the planetary spheres and the Rulers who govern them. It would be necessary to add the various Pythagorean geometrical theorems, knowing the importance they have for Freemasonry and the science and art of building; it would suffice to point out among them that of the right triangle, later enunciated by Euclid, another of the Masonic ancestors, as we have already mentioned. In 1570 John Dee, the well-known Elizabethan magician and noted mathematician who played such an important role in English - and European - Hermeticism, published a famous prologue to Euclid's *Elements of Geometry*. As is well known, Dee's teachings were taken up by Robert Fludd who edited in 1619 his *Utriusque Cosmi Historia*, and through him, concatenated with the future members of speculative Freemasonry.

7

J. A. Ferrer Benimelli, *Bibliography of Freemasonry*. Fundación Universitaria Española. Madrid 1978, p. 112. This Jesuit priest who has given impetus to Masonic studies in Spanish - to the point that some authors on Masonry such as J. A. Vaca de Osma (*La Masonería y el Poder*) wonder whether he is not really a member of the Order - nevertheless has little idea of it, taking it as a philanthropic and spiritualist society, not giving it any initiatory category, a term he never uses and which he does not even seem to be aware of in its true dimension.

8

La Symbolique au Grade d'Apprenti, *La Symbolique au Grade de Compagnon*, *La Symbolique au Grade de Maître*, Edimaf, Paris 1986, , and 1990; *La Symbolique des Nombres*, idem, 1984. We would also like to highlight here the widely known books in Spanish by Magister (Aldo Lavagnini): *Manual of the Apprentice*, of the *Companion*, of the *Master*, of the *Grand Chosen*, etc. In fact, all Masonic manuals have arithmetical-geometrical mentions.

9

As early as 1824 Thomas de Quincey highlighted in a London newspaper the conjunction of Freemasonry with Rosicrucianism as a familiar theme.

10

Masonic genealogy is also biblical, even if it is combined with Egyptian genealogy. Israel's relationship with Egypt in the time of Moses and even the symbolism of Egypt in the Christian Gospels should be remembered. According to the book of Kings I, 3-1, there is a direct filiation between King Solomon and Egypt, since the latter was the son-in-law of Pharaoh, his neighbour.

11

"The few notes on his connection with Freemasonry which Ashmole has left are landmarks in the sparsely documented history of the craft in the seventeenth century". C. H. Josten, Elias Ashmole. Ashmolean Museum and Museum of The History of Sciences, Oxford 1985. These diaries have been published under the title: Elias Ashmole, His Autobiographical and Historical Notes, his Correspondence and other Contemporary Sources relating to his life and Work. Introd. C. H. Josten, 5 vols. Deny, 1967.

12

According to the changes demanded by the cycles and rhythms, which no Tradition or Organisation, however initiatory can escape, and mark the different phases and forms in which the Perennial Cosmogony expresses itself, and therefore also indicate the historical adaptations to it.

13

According to Geoffrey of Monmouth in History of the Kings of Britain (1135-39), one of the earliest chronicles written on the History of England, the islanders came from the Trojans who arrived on its shores, passing first through France, from Greece, where the descendants of those who survived the famous war remained.

14

Something analogous in that it is suspected of being heretical, defective, or false, happens with the systems, or religions, of the East. Except that the latter enjoy more widespread prestige in Western circles, although these sometimes fail to avoid disdain, or phobia, on the grounds that they are polytheistic, another term that in the mouths of some would seem to be an insult.

15

It is obvious that Freemasonry grew with the birth of the burghs and the culture of the cities, which have always needed builders to make them effective, so it is not difficult to infer that every major city in Europe, as well as the construction of castles, fortifications, convents and palaces, was built by Masonic architects, builders and masons, not to mention carpenters and joiners, glaziers, sculptors and painters, all initiated into the secrets of their craft. This is clearly seen in the modern period (and also has to do with the shift from the operative to the speculative), in connection with the fire in the City of London - which included St. Paul's Cathedral - and which had to be completely rebuilt by skilled hands led by the architect Christopher Wren, a senior Mason in the Order and of recognised renown, who had to carry out this gigantic task in the shortest possible time. The Fire of London is a fundamental theme in the history of England and Freemasonry in general. Its reconstruction, carried out by Freemasons, is a cyclical symbol of the continuity of the Sacred Science which, manifesting itself everywhere, has expressed itself in such a magical city as the English capital.

16

Medieval Craftsmen, Masons and Sculptors. British Museum, 1991.

17

Cf. Villard de Honnecourt, Notebook, 13th century. Presented and annotated by Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, Régine Pernoud, Jean Gimpel, Roland Bechman. Ed. Akal, Madrid 1991.

18

It is important to note, from the very beginning, the presence of military personnel in all the lodges. So much so that some of them were even exclusively military, both those organised on military bases and those operating on ships, whether on the high seas or in harbours.

19

As is well known, a numerous current of Freemasons is especially linked to the Templar, Scottish and Jacobite origins of the Order, for which they exhibit numerous testimonies and facts that are highly probable. This is without denying the Pythagorean, Hermetic and Platonic heritage, as well as that of the builders' , the Rosicrucians and the Jewish influence given by the myth of Hiram and the building of Solomon's Temple. Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, in their book *The Temple and the Lodge* (London 1989) supporting the validity of this origin which they develop in their work from the Middle Ages to the 18th century state: p. 187, "It [Freemasonry] had its roots in families and associations linked by the ancient oath of allegiance to the Stuarts and the Stuart monarchy (?) James I, a Scottish king who was himself a Freemason". In Robert Kirk's work, *The Secret Common-Wealth*, ("La Comunidad Secreta". Madrid, Siruela 1993) written in 1692, about "The most remarkable customs of the People of Scotland", this erudite historian of the most ancient Scottish "folklore" and Celtic culture, notes under the heading "Singularities of Scotland", and as a characteristic of that kingdom: "The Masonic word, of which, though there be some who make a mystery of it, I will not conceal the little I know. It is like a rabbinical tradition, by way of commentary on Jakin and Boaz, the two upright pillars of Solomon's Temple, to which is added some secret sign, passed from hand to hand, by which they recognise and familiarise themselves with each other".

20

The others are considered, in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite: "perfection", "capitular" and "administrative".

21

Vuillaume, le Tailleur. Ed. du Rocher, Monaco 1990, reprint of that of 1830. Masonic manual containing the following Rites practised in France: Ancient and Accepted Scottish, French, Adoption Masonry, and Egyptian or Misraim. See here p. 385.

22

José A. Ferrer Benimelli, *La Masonería Española en el siglo XVIII*. Siglo XXI de España Editores, Madrid 1986.

23

"The Hermetic Books". SYMBOLOS N° 11-12, Guatemala 1996 (Reproduced on the author's website).

24

Les Presses de l'Université Laval, Quebec 1978-1982. 2 vols.

25

And which is common to the rest of the Hermetic literature, including Alchemy.

26

The Corpus discourse is indeed reiterative and certain axioms or maxims are repeated in a tone that carries a certain solemnity, a "style" to be identified among other tones, and also because it is stamped with a musical cadence, which, as well as fixing the memory, is an "invocative" agent.

HERMETIC TRADITION AND FREEMASONRY

FEDERICO GONZALEZ

(end)

Indeed, the medieval builders' guilds have given Freemasonry its structure, including the three initiatory degrees, and its fundamental symbolism linked to the Art of Building. This influence derives, or at least has antecedents in the Roman Collegia or Scholae, linked to the Mystery Religions, which in turn are linked to Egypt, as we have already said. On the other hand, in Greco-Egyptian Alexandria, in the first centuries before and after Christianity, there was a resurgence of both the Mysteriic religions, which still existed, and of Neoplatonic, Pythagorean and Theurgic-Gnostic studies, which led to a current in which the Hermetic Tradition would channel these energies until the Renaissance, when they would flourish again, passing through the Middle Ages, where they took on Christian forms, which was not difficult given the identity of both traditions in terms of their origins and aims. It is precisely in the Middle Ages

-when thousands of temples, castles, and entire cities were built all over Europe, both in Romanesque and Gothic style, by means of these guild associations, incorporated into the medieval city as constituent elements of its order- where the Hermetic gnosis is based, through Pythagoras and Arithmosophy, that is to say the true sense of numbers, proportions, orientation, cycles, etc..., that is to say: the mysteries of Cosmogony, the secrets of the trade, manifested by the Philosophy of the Fathers of the Church and Dionysius the Areopagite, among others, and above all, no doubt, by the Christian Gospel, St. Paul, and the traditional mythological, religious and agricultural background of the cultures prior to Christianity.²⁷

All these spiritual, or intellectual, influences pass directly into Freemasonry as documented in German and English manuscripts, and it is upon this structure that the other elements we have mentioned are added. Alchemy is thus integrated into this thought, since it is but another expression or adaptation of this traditional knowledge, and the Adepts themselves come under the Hermetic affiliation and patronage. The same is true of the Rosicrucians, heirs of Hermetic thought and historically related to them and to Freemasonry. Also because of its medieval roots, the association of the Order with other building and knightly Orders is to be sought.

Masonic jewellery

Engraving by E. Curtis, undated. Printed in 1801

As for the Jewish element, we would be astonished if it were not present in an initiatory Order born in Europe, for together with Christianity, which derives from it, it has conveyed the diverse elements that we now call the West, where the figure of the sage, king and builder, incarnated by Solomon, stands out. Indeed, the symbolism of the Masonic temple is fundamental in Freemasonry and is recognised as the model and repository of all science, a view shared by the sages; thus in Isaac Newton's manuscript entitled "The original of religions" it is said: "So it was the purpose of the first institution true religion in Egypt to set mankind, by the structure of the ancient temples, the study of the structure of the world as the true Temple of the great God whom they worshipped?"

Freemasonry is, according to all this, the happy result of the relationship and synthesis between different forms of access to Knowledge, and the uniqueness that these forms proclaim. But it is clear that such an enterprise has not been the work of a few people, or the work of individual actions aimed at achieving that synthesis, despite the gratitude that various personalities deserve in that regard. Freemasonry is - and will continue to be - a repository of Traditional Wisdom that bestows Knowledge on those who are capable of receiving it, and which it has generously expanded spiritually - the lodge is a condenser of energies - and disseminated culturally through the writings and participation of its members in various institutions, not to mention public laws, social works, or charities. To this must be added the perennial dignification of work, the true object of worship of its discipline and the instrument of knowledge of a Freemason and therefore a human activity by nature.

We will point out that whatever Masonic origins they point again and again to the medieval craftsmen and builders and not to the priests and nobles of the time. It is known the ranks were very fixed in the Middle Ages and basically included four categories of decreasing importance: a) the Church, the Papacy and the clergy as wisdom, b) the kingship and the nobility, particularly in their military aspect, c) the clerks, merchants and professionals (artists and craftsmen), and d) the peasantry, engaged in service and production.²⁹

Freemasonry must be considered as originating in this third estate according to cyclical laws, although its mythical histories include builder kings and wise architects, and in the 18th century it was constituted by the nobility and in the 19th century it decidedly enjoyed the support of a bourgeoisie that was already in power; also significant is the incorporation of Alchemy (Via Regia), together with the inclusion of Hermetic Philosophy as a component priestly wisdom.

The doctrine of cycles tells us that in indeterminate succession they are chained one to another, but that each has a common prototypical quaternary organisation, which develops in an invariable order, so that a certain constituent element of the cycle predominates over the others, which is obvious in the quaternity of man's ages: childhood, youth, maturity and old age. It is the same with history, and each of the quaternary components of society must have a period of supremacy over the others. Thus it has been clear in the history of the West the loss of power of the Church to the nobility and of the nobility to the bourgeoisie, ending in the proletarian masses which today hold a large part of the power, not only in the Church, but also in the bourgeoisie.

However, the prevailing confusion in this respect contradicts them to the extent that the same family, or the same social milieu, produces a philosopher or a lout, a noble man or a beast.

In any case, the Hindu Tradition also credits this division into Castes (which has nothing to do with "social classes"), which also present in the most archaic cultures, which are fixed by Fate, since they are determined by birth, although as we have seen in the present age the estates are so mixed that their validity is disintegrating since humanity is in the last stage of a period of dissolution which, as we know, is called Kali Yuga.

From a historical point of view, Freemasonry came into being at a time when the guilds of craftsmen became institutions of power and the professionalism of their members played a role in the framework of the State. This influence goes hand in hand with the loss of importance of the Church and the Monarchy, and corresponds to the growing preponderance of the bourgeoisie, made up of professionals, merchants and administrators, in later centuries. And this determination to historical cycles and castes will in some way mark the Masons (despite the worldly pretensions of some), who generally belong to these professional and commercial social classes, who are also protected by the god Mercury.

Emphasising that for the aforementioned Hindu Tradition it is the Kshatriyas and particularly the Vaishyas (a caste that can also access liberation like the sages and warriors) who could be equated with the sociological and historical strata of Freemasonry, also related to Noah (and his boat), i.e. as the repository of the very ancient Sacred Science, emanating from the Hermetic Tradition.³⁰

Finally, even medieval Freemasonry is nomadic, or rather semi-nomadic, and the builders of cathedrals, castles, or burghs, travelled from one area to another according to their needs, related to their movements just as tribes change their locations according to their own. At a certain moment these builders settled in different cities and founded guilds of different trades, since the city had grown and developed together with them; they are now therefore sedentary personnel, and thus settled, they offer in one way or another their indispensable knowledge for all orderly and civilising work. As we see, it is also possible to relate Freemasonry in its evolution to the various stages through which culture is generated, basically settled in the cities. Abel has given way to Cain and the builders change their way of acting, forming the solid model of the cities, and finally of the state. Cain has killed Abel, but thanks to his sacrifice the builder is able to pass through the rigid path of the forms, to the non-formal essence, which nevertheless contains them in a potential way. The builder then carries out by means of a contingent industry an eminently metaphysical and transcendent business.

It is interesting to note that Cain - as we know, the ancestor of the Masons - was condemned by YHWH to be a wandering wanderer on earth to purge the crime committed against his brother Abel. However, while he was building a city, his wife gave birth to his son Enoch (an appellation that appears in the Old Testament as that of the son of Cain and the fifth son of Seth)³¹ whose name was extended to the village. The latter (Genesis 4, 9 to 18) confirms what was said above with regard to the fact of permanent wandering and the subsequent establishment of a family, which is projected in a house and later in a city, or civilisation.

We believe that this kind of symbolism related to cosmic, or cyclical, phenomena is at the root of the issue of the passage from operative to speculative Freemasonry, that is, of the adaptation to new modes of expression of Sacred Science in relation to the vagaries of human thought.³² In any case, this is a fact that always occurs in any transformation where something is lost and something is regenerated; some prefer to lament what has been lost, others rejoice in the fact that the doctrine has survived, beyond more or less political quarrels (Hanover-Estuardo) or forms of Christianity (reformed churches - subject to Rome). In the latter case, the validity of the reforms undertaken by the "moderns" universalised Freemasonry by opening its doors to Jews (1732) and Islam (1738), in an ecumenical manner to the detriment of a provincial orthodoxy claimed by certain agents of ecclesiastical power. And if many Freemasons - among whom we are

We include - reject the power of Rome, not as members of the Order, but exclusively as Christians, committed to the Gospel texts and therefore also to the Old Testament, to the detriment of the new liberation theology.

And while Freemasonry, as we have seen repeatedly, has its origins in the medieval stone masons, and therefore in the religious rigidities of the conceptions of that time, it should not be forgotten that from that time until the 18th century, where it takes its speculative form, these builders have lived immersed in a new world, that of the Renaissance, these builders have lived immersed in a new world, that of the Renaissance, inspired by the Corpus Hermeticum, Pythagoreanism (also the Orphic Hymns and the Chaldean Oracles) and above all by Plato, the Neoplatonists and Proclus, which is reflected in their palaces, churches, gardens and towers, interior architecture, mechanical devices and other wonders of natural magic and scientific and artistic experimentation (paintings, sculptures, goldsmiths and furniture) which had their origin in the Medici Academy, led by Marsilio Ficino, whose influence spread throughout Europe for almost three centuries, and which was certainly present in Elizabethan England and its successors, leading not coincidentally, and just to name one example, to the translation of the Corpus Hermeticum by Sir Walter Scott, a master mason, at the same time as the English lodges burst into modern history.

The various Rites and Obediences, despite their heterogeneity, have in common the Great Architect of the Universe, and a shared craft: the Art and Science of Building, which find their fullest expression in the Symbol. In a way, this diversity could be compared to the different "gnosis" of the first centuries of our era, even the Christian one, whose ultimate aim was obviously the same, despite the different misappropriations in which any association can be involved.

This "atomisation" of the Lodges is, in fact, the way Freemasonry has historically multiplied, and it should not surprise us then that this or that Workshop will focus on one or another aspect of the symbols, or the origins of the Order, depending on whether they feel more or less identified with them. The same is true of those more emotionally related to a certain religion, or to humanist concepts of different kinds.³³

All these ideas, or rather the convergence and implementation of these Masonic currents, can today also take place in a wider environment than that of the workshops, where often purely personal questions of sympathy and antipathy, or social or economic and political problems can create tensions and even abysses between members. This could find a solution, as indeed it already does, in certain Masonic study lodges,

These lodges, which meet once or twice a year during the solstices and celebrate the solstices, are strictly doctrinal and historical in their work on the symbols, rites and initiatory antecedents of the Order, without being affected by the various influences that run between the different workshops; as already been said, they are lodges of Masters who have already been Officers or Worshipful of different lodges and who have proved by numerous circumstances and over the years their belonging to the origins, usages and customs and duties of the Order.

To conclude this brief overview, we would like to highlight the importance of Freemasonry - and through it the Hermetic Tradition - in the independence and organisation of the American republics (North, Central and South), where the figures of Francisco de Miranda, Simón Bolívar, Jorge Washington, José de San Martín, Antonio José de Sucre, José Martí, Miguel Hidalgo,³⁴ etc., not only founders of countries, constitutions, legislations and institutions, but also of cities, such as the city of Washington DC, the capital of the United States, which bears the name of its founder, and the city of La Plata, in the province of Buenos Aires, founded by Master Mason Dardo Rocha.³⁵ It should be noted that the above-mentioned was done based on the ordinance of the Hermetic Tradition, The above-mentioned was done on the basis of the organisation of these peoples, promoting culture, education, art and good manners in countries where disorganisation and violence prevailed, with Freemasonry fulfilling a civilising function that subsists in different forms to the present day, since America, its institutions and way of life, has historically been born under its sign.

George Washington laying the cornerstone of the United States Congress. 18 September 1793, by J. Melins

City map of La Plata

NOTES

27

As a curiosity, it should be noted that the Order of the Temple alone, within the first century of its constitution (1128), built 80 cathedrals, 60 abbeys and 9000 encomiendas.

28

Isaac Newton, The Temple of Solomon. Introd. by J. M. Sánchez Ron, p. XXIX. Translation and philological study by C. Moreno. Debate/CSIC, Madrid 1996 (see review here).

29

In fact, the link between Freemasonry and the powers-that-be has been established since the early days of the Order, even in its myths, in its relationship with the various European kingdoms, princes and nobles, and later with the economic and political milieus characterised by the incorporation of a growing bourgeoisie with command and influence in modern society. See the following list and appendix.

In England: Kings Athelstan and Edwin (10th century), Edward III (1327-1377), who strongly favoured the institution, protector of the lodges and of the arts and sciences. James I of England (and VI of Scotland), son of Mary Stuart. Of the House of Windsor: George IV, (1762-1830), William IV (1765-1837), Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland and King of Hanover (1771-1851), George V of Hanover (1819-1878), Edward VII (1841-1910), George VI (1895-1952), and also Frederick Louis, Prince of Wales (1707-51), William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland (1721-65), Edward Augustus, Duke of York (1739-67), William Henry, Duke of Gloucester (1743-1805), Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland (1745-90), Frederick Augustus, Duke of York (1763-1827), Edward Augustus, Duke of Kent (1767-1820), Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex (1773-1843), Arthur, Duke of Connaught (1850-1942), Leopold, Duke of Albany (1853-1884), Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence (1864-1892), Prince Arthur of Connaught (1883-1938), Edward VIII, last Duke of Windsor (1894-1972), George, Duke of Kent (1902-1942), to the present Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, and Edward, Duke of Kent (1935).

[illegible]

Stainville, de Luynes, de Lauzun; Duke Sigismund de Montmorency-Luxembourg, special administrator of the Order (Grand Orient and Grand Lodge of France) from 1771 to 1789, of great memory as a nobleman and Freemason. In Belgium: Court de Gebelin is noted for the international importance he acquired in Freemasonry; he was also a member of the government of the Belgian monarchy that had Leopold I as its first king, who was a Freemason, as well as other members of this family.

To the personnel of France we must also add the highest dignitaries of the Napoleonic Empire, starting with Napoleon himself and his delegate Prince J.-Jacques Regis de Cambacérès, Duke of Parma, Grand Master of the Grand Orient (1806-15) and Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite under the Empire, as well as of three other Rites; in turn, at least 17 of the 25 marshals of the First Empire were Freemasons. All this without taking into account the economic and political means of the bourgeoisie and the intellectual weight of the new nobles and intellectuals who replaced the nobility. Examples: Voltaire, Montesquieu, Condorcet (encyclopaedist), then La Rochefoucault, Gérard de Nerval(?), etc. the scholars La Cépède, Lalande, Montgolfier, heading a generation that included inventors, doctors, painters and musicians, and all kinds of researchers, most of them today forgotten but who contributed in their time to the development of today's culture, many of them members of the French Academy and Lyceum, the Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Arts, etc. etc. etc. etc. The same applies to the above-mentioned countries and their intellectual, scientific (especially in England), political and economic figures until the 20th century. In the capitals and provinces the authorities were Masonic and even today there are entire Masonic families who have proudly received this heritage.

Annex

Nobles: England: Grand Masters (i.e. excluding the others who joined the Order from the 17th century onwards): Earl of Bedford, G. Master of the North (York), 1567; earl of Pembroke, 1618 (at which time "eminent, learned and wealthy persons" entered: Dicc. Encycl. de la M^a.); Earl of St. Alban 1663; of Rivers, 1666; of Dalkeith, 1724; of Inchington, 1724; Lord Colerane, 1727, who constituted a lodge at Madrid; vizc. Kingston, 1729, Grand Master of Ireland in 1731; lord Lovel, afterwards Earl of Leicester, who received in 1731 the later Emperor Francis I of Germany; lord vizc. Montagu, 1732; Earl of Strathmore, 1733; of Crawford, 1734; of London, 1736; of Darnley, 1737, who received Prince Frederick of Wales; Lord Carnarvon, 1738; Marquis of Carnarvon, 1754, during whose term of office 49 lodges were founded; Lord Aberdour, 1758-63; Lord Blaney, 1764, (71 lodges); between this year and 1767 (Duke of Beaufort) the Dukes of Gloucester, Cumberland and York were received Masons (1765); in 1772 the Duke of Athol was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Ancients, and in 1773 and 1778-79 of Scotland; likewise the Duke of Manchester, c. 1780; the Duke of Cumberland, c. 1780; the Duke of Cumberland, 1765, was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Ancients, and in 1773 and 1778-79 of Scotland. 1780; the Duke of Cumberland and the Earl of Effingham, 1782. To these must be added the Duke of Wharton, Grand Master of England (1722) and also of France (1728), founder of the first lodge in Madrid (1728); Lord Derwenwater, Grand Master in France (1736-37); introducers with others of speculative Freemasonry in that country. Ireland: Grand Masters: Viscounts Kingston, 1731; Kingsland, 1732; Visc. lord Mountjoy, 1738; de Donneraile, 1740; Baron of Tullamore, 1741; Visc. Alleau, 1744; lord Kingsborough, who died in prison because of imprisonment for debt after having financed the first great edition of the pre-Columbian codices. Scotland: after W. Saint-Clair, 1736, the Earl of Cromarty, 1737; Earls: de Kintore, then G. M. of England; of Morton, 1739; of Leven, 1741; of Killmarnock; of Wemyss, 1743; lord Essquin, 1749; earl of Englenton, 1750; lord Aberdour, 1755-56; earls: of Galloway 1757-58; of Leven, 1759-60; of Elgin, 1761-62; of Kellie, 1763-64; lord Provist, 1765-66; earl of Dalhousie, 1767-68; Gen. J. A. Oughton, 1769-70; Earl of Dumfries, 1771-

72; the Duke of Athol, 1773 and 1778-79; Baron Forbes, 1776-77; Counts: de Balcanas, 1780-81; de Buchan, 1782-83. Other nobles who appear in France in the works cited: Princes: Sapiéha (Polish), Kavauski; Galitzin; Bozotowski; Counts: de Buzençois; de Balbi; Stroganoff; de Saisseval; de Launay; Viscount Le Veneur; Marquises: De La Fayette, closely linked with Washington and American Independence, de Saisseval, d'Arcambal; de Saint-Simon, de Lusignan; de Hautoy; de Gouy d'Arcy. We quote from Le Forestier's book, *Maçonnerie féminine et Loges académiques* (see review here) some names heading a group of about 200 members and visiting brothers according to the minutes of the Parisian lodge Saint-Jean du Candor, constituted in 1775 and to which an adopted lodge was attached, of whom only seven were not nobles, most of the latter being titled and serving in the army: "Viscount d'Espinchal, colonel of dragoons; Count de la Châtre, colonel of regiment; Chevalier de Fitz-James, colonel of the Berwick regiment; Count de Rieux, colonel of cavalry; Count de Saint-Maime, colonel of the Soissonais-Infantry regiment; Baron de Salis, inspector of infantry; Count de Barbançon, colonel of Orléans-Infantry; Baron de Béthune, field marshal cavalry; Count de Bouffiers-Rouvel, colonel of Royal-Cravatte; Count Maxim de Puységur, captain of the Corsican Legion; Viscount de Puységur, captain of the King's ships; Counts de Vauban, de Seuil, de Chatenoy, Duleau, D'Ambly, de Roquelaure, de Vassy, etc. etc. captains in various regiments, to which are added twenty-seven other counts, and the rest of viscounts, marquises, barons and knights, without this being the only military lodge (the Saint Louis lodge in the East of the King's regiment is worth mentioning: after settling again in Nancy, two years later it had two hundred and twenty-six members).

From the same book we quote French noblewomen, belonging to lodges of adoption: the Duchess of Bourbon, who received in 1776 the title of Grand Mistress of all Lodges of Adoption in France: At the meeting, "the Duke of Chartres presided over the proceedings: six hundred people were present, including the Duchess of Chartres, the Princess of Lamballe, the Duchesses of Luynes and Brancas, the Countess of Caylus, the Viscountess of Tavannes, the Marquises of Clermont and Sabran. After the masonic work was over, the audience descended into the brilliantly illuminated gardens, where entertainment mixed with music and song preceded a fireworks display, the main work of which represented the Temple of Friendship and Virtue. A banquet and dance followed, and the party ended with a collection for charitable purposes" (p. 87). Other ladies of the nobility, belonging to lodges linked to the men's lodges of the same name: the Grand Inspector Marquise de Villervauvey, the Countesses de Durfort, Janey; Marquise de Felletan, de Germigny, de Molan; Baroness de Glanc (Loge Sincérité de Besançon); Duchess de Cossé-Brissac, Countesses de Caumont, de Saint-Pierre de Pontcarré, Baroness de Beaumont (Saint-Louis de Dieppe); in the "particularly elegant and aristocratic" Lodge of Perfect Friendship in Toulouse, the Marquesses of Crouzet, of Rességuier, of Montlaur, Viscountess of Rochemaure, Baroness of Panetier, Mmes. de Saint-Victor, de Mahieu, de Rochefort, de Lacroix, etc. etc. etc. in addition to the Officers of the Lodge, most of them being wives of the members of the male Lodge; the Duchess of Harcourt, Countesses of Blagny, of Briqueville, of Faudoas, of Lestre, of Brassac, of Beaufort, Viscountess of Mathan, Marquesses of Briqueville, of Bouthillier, of Molans (Saint Louis military Lodge in Caen); Baroness de Viomesnil, Grand Inspector, Princess de Horns, Viscountess de Nédonchelle, Countesses de la Valette, de Pestalozzi, de Marguerie, du Petit-Thouars, de Messey, Marquise de Balivières (Saint Louis Lodge in Nancy). Other lodges of adoption: La Verdadera Virtue in Annonay, La Perfecta Union in Rennes, La Concordia in Rochefort, Les Neuf Sœurs in Toul, Philadelphes in Narbonne, the very important Saint-Jean du Candor in Paris, etc.

31

Enoch the son of Cain is the ancestor of the first worker of metals, bronze and iron: Tubalcain, well known in Freemasonry. Hiram-Abi, son of Israel and Tyre, the Master Hiram of the Masons, is a craftsman of bronze and iron, but also of gold and silver, stone and wood, weaving and engraving (II Chronicles 2, 13). Enoch the fifth son of Seth is the one who "disappeared, because God took him away" (Genesis 5, 24). Tubalcain's father, Lamech, also appears in Seth's descendants, and in it he is the father of Noah (Gen. 5:24).

32

It should also be noted that the first version of Anderson's Constitutions was incomplete and contained only two initiatory degrees. This strange omission was compounded by the suppression of Royal Arch Masonry, with only Square Masonry being taken into account, without being crowned by Compass Masonry, both of which are known to be symbols of earth and heaven. This was opposed by the genuinely operative Lodges who, rejecting this error, went on to defend the Ancient Constitutions, led in 1725 by the Grand Lodge of York, or in 1751 by the Grand Lodge of the Ancients, who only agreed to meet with the Grand Lodge of London, (that of the Moderns, for whom Anderson had written his Constitutions) in 1813, after the latter had agreed to include in their midst what had been from time immemorial the Tradition of the Order; The earlier heritage was thus reconstituted in the form that has survived to the present day. This kind of misunderstanding has caused some Masonic authors to be suspicious of certain aspects of Pastor Anderson's work, who seems to have wanted to divert the aims and origins of Freemasonry, although it must be said to his credit, that in other historically valid Masonic documents, only the degrees of Apprentice and Companion appear. In any , if there was such an intention it did not prevail and Anderson's Constitutions were reworked and Tradition was imposed. From another point of view, any adaptation to modern times of an ancient Tradition needs a profound adaptation which only time and many other factors, even of contrary sign, promote. The Church of Rome could be an almost chameleon-like model of adaptation: from scholasticism to liberation theology, from sophiology to modern science, from the sacred to the religious. And to add that Freemasonry, as an Initiatory Institution, has outlived Catholics and Protestants.

33

As the goes, "No one receives an inheritance with benefit of inventory".

34

In the United States, the names linked to the future U.S.A. are numerous in both quality and quantity: the names of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson (according to F. M. Hunter, Research Lodge of Oregon, 1951), James Madison, are obvious to all those who have studied the history of this country and its immense impact on the rest of Latin America and the world. Hunter, Research Lodge of Oregon, 1952), James Madison, are obvious to all those who have studied the history of this country and its immense repercussion on the rest of Latin America and the world; bear in mind the importance that the independence and political organisation of the U.S.A. had for the independence and organisation of Latin America; both the first American and Latin American presidents were Masons. There are doubts about the membership of Adams, also a very important figure in North America; we must add Alexander Hamilton, although he was not president (his book The Federalist was very influential), and also Monroe, Andrew Jackson, Polk, Buchanan, Andrew Johnson, Garfield, Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, Harding, Franklin D. Roosevelt, until Truman and the end of World War II.

Politicians and Liberators: Simón Bolívar (Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia), José de S. Martín (Chile and Peru), Antonio J. de Sucre (Ecuador), José Martí (Cuba), Francisco de Miranda (who initiated Bolívar, O'Higgins and S. Martín in the lodge Gran Reunión Americana which he had constituted in England), Bros. O'Higgins, Carlos de Alvear, Bermudez, Undarreta, A. Paez, O'Connor, D. Jimenez, J. M. de Aleman, Arizmendi, J. Tadeo Moragas, Rodríguez Peña, Pueyrredon, Maceo, M. Gomez, Grales. A. Valero, D. de Tristán, etc. Presidents: Argentina: Justo J. de Urquiza, Bartolomé Mitre, historian and Grand Master, Santiago Derqui, Domingo F. Sarmiento, who made the reform and planted the pillars of educational development, who was also G. Master of the Grand Orient. Brazil: José Bonifacio de Andrade, Fco. José Cardoso, Luis A. Vieira da Silva, Joaquín de Macedo Soares, Eusebio de Queiroz (abolished slavery), Manuel Dodere de Fonseca (Republic, 1889). Colombia: León Echeverría, Gral. Mosquera, Fco. de Paula Santander, Gral. A. Nariño. Venezuela: Diego B. Urbaneja (vice-president of the country in 1847-48, president of the Colombian National Grand Orient and of the Grand Lodge of Colombia established in Caracas in 1824, belonging to the former the principal civil and military architects of the independence of Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama, all 33rd); Antonio Páez, José Tadeo Moragas, José Gregorio Moragas, (end of slavery); Antonio Guzmán Blanco, Joaquín Crespo, Andueza Palacio, Grand Masters. Peru: José Rufino Echenique (1852), Miguel San Román. Mexico: Miguel Hidalgo, Vicente Guerrero, Guadalupe Victoria, Guadalupe Gómez Pedraza, Javier Echevarria, Nicolás Bravo, Benito Juárez, Melchor Ocampo, Sebastián Tejada, Porfirio Díaz, Francisco Madero, etc. many of them Grand Masters.

35

In large, medium-sized, and even small American cities, Masonic lodge building always occupies a prominent place.

RITUALS OF THE THEBAHNOTA LODGE TO EDITION

René Guénon was affiliated to the Thébah Lodge of the Grand Lodge of France around 1910, attending until probably 1912. According to J. Baylot (Planète Plus, 1970), during his stay there he read a tracing whose frontispiece was "The Initiatic Teaching" (later published in *Le Symbolisme*, January 1913), the content of which would be developed in his book *Aperçus sur l'Initiation*.

Denys Roman says (René Guénon et les destins de la Franc-Maçonnerie) that R. Guénon particularly appreciated this version among the others of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite followed at the time in France. Guénon particularly appreciated this version among the other versions of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite followed at the time in France; also, that it comes from a Scottish Ritual of the First Empire, from which he did not retain, among other elements, the circulation of the Word of Passage at the Opening nor the "labyrinthine march" of the Candidate before his introduction into the Temple, but the presence of the "Deacons", which are no longer found in the current forms of the R. E. A. A. A., among others.

The translation is based on the Archè edition, Milan 1983. Among the accompanying documents, for consideration and comparison, the one from the U.S.A. (Ancient York Rite) includes elements that appear in ancient documents such as some of those cited in the notes. Included from the Scottish Rectified Rite is what is most generally noteworthy for its differences or its complementarity with the R. E. A. A. A.

As the community paper "On Freemasonry", published in the journal *Vers la Tradition*, and translated in No. 5 of the journal *SYMBOLOS*, states, Freemasonry is eclatée (= fragmented and "radiated" or expanded in the form of

luminous) in the various Obediences and the various Rites. But all this is nevertheless included in the idea of a Masonic Rite, an expression of the cosmic or universal order, in which the differences are absorbed in the original Unity, which they manifest in the different Degrees and the different Rites, whatever their specific characteristics, which are always found between the Square and the Compass of Masonic Initiation, whose origin, centre and end is the Principle, designated, and especially in the First Degree, as "The Great Architect of the Universe". Moreover, the Masonic formula "to spread the light and gather the dispersed" never refers to an addition of parts, but to a synthesis from which they emanate and which each expresses in its own way. This, which refers to the reconstitution or reintegration of the principal Unity, is also expressed in the Unity and transparency of the Masonic Rite.

The texts included in the Annexes are from private collections except those for which the source is indicated.

Translation and notes: Francisco Ariza and José Manuel Río

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Grand Architect of the Universe. Venerable

(head of the Lodge).

Come, Venerable Master.

Dearest Brother.

M\ Q V\ V\ - Dearest Venerable.

1st Watch - First Watchman.

2nd Watch - Second Watchman.

Brother. Brother Secretary.

Ceremonial Brother - Master of Ceremonies.

Orator Brother.

Terrible Brother. Brother

Treasurer.

Apprentice Mason.

Columns.

Grand Lodge.

Iron.

.

R\ L\ - Respectable

Lodge. T - Temple.

Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. A -

Ancient York Rite.

Scottish Rectified Rite.

OPENING OF WORK (of which rite?????)

VEN, what is the first duty of a Vig in Lodge? 1st VIG - To ensure that the Temple is covered1.

VEN - Make sure of it, HEN.

(The Guardianship Officer takes up his duties and reports to the 1st Vice-Chairman).

1st VIG, the Temple is covered.

VEN\ - What is the second duty of a watchman in LEN\?

1st VIG - Make sure that all the Brethren are Masons.

VEN - Be sure then, 1st. and 2nd. Watch, each on your column, and give me the results. On your feet and at your command, HH, face east2.

2nd VIG - 1st Vig, all the brethren composing the northern column are Freemasons.

1st VIG - VEN, the members standing on the north and south columns³ are Masons⁴.

VEN (strikes a blow and says:) - 2nd Deacon⁵ what is your place in Lodge?

2nd DIAC - To the right of the 1st Watch, if you consent to allow it.

VEN\ - Why, brother?

2nd DIAC - To carry his orders to the 2nd Watch and to see that all the brethren stand decently on the columns.⁶

Where is the 1st Deacon?

1st DIAC - Behind or to the right of the Ven, if he consents to allow

it. VEN - Why is the 1st D. D. 1st ?

1st DIAC - To carry his orders to the 1st Vig and all the dignitaries, so that the work may be executed more promptly⁷.

VEN - Where is the 2nd Vig? 2nd

VIG - South.

VEN - Why, O 2nd Vig, do you occupy this place?

2nd VIG - To better observe the sun on its meridian, to send the workers to work and call them from work to recreation, so that the VEN may obtain honour and glory.⁸

VEN - Where is the 1st VIG? 1st

VIG - To the west.

VEN - Why, O 1st Vig, do you occupy this place?

As the sun sets in the west to close the day, so the Watch is there to open and close the L, pay the workers and send them off happy and satisfied.

VEN - Where is VEN?

1st VIG - East. VEN -

Why, why, Hans?

1st VIG - As the sun rises in the east to begin its career, and open the day, so the VEN is there to open the earth, to direct it in its labours, and to enlighten it with its lights¹⁰.

VEN\ - At what time do apprentice Masons usually open their work?

1st VIG - At noon, VEN. VEN - What

time is it, 2nd VIG?

2nd VIG - Noon sharp¹¹, VIG .

(The Venue then gives "3" strokes of the mallet at equal distances... then turns to the 1st Deacon, to whom he gives the sacred word by whispering it in his ear: the 1st Deacon takes it to the 1st Vig, who sends it through his Deacon to the 2nd Vig, who, after having received it¹², gives a stroke of the mallet and says:)

VEN All things are just and perfect¹³.

(The VEN removes his hat¹⁴ and says:)

To the glory of the Graduate of the U, in the Name and under the Auspices of the of France, I declare the works opened in the Degree of apprentice in the Réseau constituted to the East of Paris with the no. 347 and the distinctive title of Thebah.

To me, HH, for the Sign, the simple Battery and the acclamation:

Huzzé! Huzzé! Huzzé! Huzzé! ¹⁵

Take a seat, Mr. SECRET. give us a reading of the plot of our latest works.

(When the reading is finished, the Venue knocks and the Vigs repeat).

VEN - 1st and 2nd. Vig, announce on your columns that if any of you have remarks to make, the word will be given to him.

(If there are no interventions or after have been completed:)

(The Vigs strike a blow; the first one says:)

1st VIG - Come, silence reigns over both columns.

VEN - I request your conclusions on the adoption of the plan drawn from our recent work. HH\ Servíos sancionar las conclusiones del H\ Or\ según la forma acostumbrada.

Come to the atrium of the church to make sure if there are any visitors.

(The M\ of Cerin goes and returns to give an account between the two Vigs. He arranges the certificates of the visiting HHs on the altar, and returns to keep them company. After his verification, the VEN says:)

VEN - HH Guardatemplo, announce to the M. of Ceremplo that he can present the visitors.

(Cerro's M strikes, the Vigs announce it).

VEN, give them entry to the Temple: stand and order, HEN!

(Reception of delegations).17

RECEPTION OF AN APPRENTICE

Come and see if the layman has made his will.18

(The Exp brings the will to the VEN, who has it read by the H. Or; the VEN then asks the H. Tes if he is satisfied).

TES - I am satisfied.

Come back to the profane, prepare him and lead him to the door of the T before the Ceremonial Master.

(The Exp æ blindfolds him, strips him of his metals, leaves him in a shirt from head to waist, his left breast uncovered, his right knee bare and his left foot in slippers¹⁹. The M ° of Cer \, having received the neophytes [or the neophyte] gives a great knock at the door of the T \. The two VVig ers repeat it alternately and the first one says:)

1st VIG - COME, to the door of the T urn profanely!

Come, see who it is, H ere, who is the reckless one who daresdisturb our solemn Labours?

Who is the bold one who comes to force his way in?

H \M \ of Cer \ - He is a profane man who asks to be admitted among us!

VEN \ \ - How dare he wait for it?

Because it is free and of good manners.

Come, since he is free²⁰ and of good morals, ask him for his name, the place of his birth, his age, in what religion he was born, his civil status and his present abode.

After all this information has been given, the Venue says:

COME - Bring in the neophyte!²¹

(As he enters, the Terrible H puts the point of his sword on his left breast and makes him feel it).

VEN - What do you feel? what do you see?

sir! PROF ...

This weapon, the point of which you feel, is the image of the remorse which would rend your heart if you should ever become a perjurer against the society into which you wish to have the good fortune to enter. The blindness in which you find yourselves symbolises the state into which every man is plunged who does not know the paths of virtue in which you are about to begin to walk.

Q - What is your request, sir?

PROF \ - I ask to be received as a Mason.

Q - Is it of your own free will, without any coercion or suggestion, that you come forward?

A Yes, sir.

COME, sir, reflect well on the request you are making; you are about to pass through terrible trials which demand all the firmness of which the most resolute character can be susceptible.

- Are you fully determined to suffer them, and do you have the courage to face all the dangers to which your indiscretion could expose you?

A Yes, sir.

VEN - Profane, in whom do you put your trust? R \ -

...

COME, Sir, before this assembly, of which I am but the organ, will consent to admit you to the trials, it must probe your heart by questioning your thoughts on the first principles of morality. What do you understand by the word FREEDOM?

R - ...

FREEDOM is the ability to do or not to do, according to the determination of the will. It is for each person the faculty to do everything that is not contrary to morality and to the freedom of others. It is the right to take advantage of the benefits guaranteed by law to other citizens and to participate by voting in the making of the law²² which must be respected by all.

VEN - What is MORAL? R \

- ...

VEN - Morality is a science that rests on human reason²³. It is the natural law, immutable and universal, which governs all intelligent and free beings. It is conscience scientifically explained: admirable science! which teaches us our duties by the reasoned use of our rights. It addresses itself to the purest sentiments of the heart, to ensure the triumph of reason and virtue.

VEN - What is Virtue? R \

- ...

VEN - The word VIRTUE, according to its etymology²⁴, means STRENGTH; the power to do absolute good. It is the fulfilment of duties. It is public virtue when it is dedicated to the Fatherland, to the State, to Society; it is private Virtue, when it is not exercised as a prowess, but disinterestedly in favour of individuals; it is domestic Virtue in the duties fulfilled towards the family. In a word, VIRTUE, in the full range of its expression, does not shrink from sacrifice, nor even from death when it is a duty to be performed.

VEN - What is Vice?²⁵

R - ...

VEN - Vice is every concession made to interest and passion, at the expense of duty. It is the satisfaction of man's evil inclinations: a deceptive mirror which shows under the sweetest aspects the impure enjoyments: an odious but seductive obstacle placed before the virtue which it seeks to pervert: a danger against which we must arm ourselves with all the forces of reason, with all the energy of character, and which we can destroy by means of the picture of the pure and sweet pleasures which a life of wisdom and virtue gives to man.

Pause...

It is to put a salutary check upon our passions, upon the impulse of greed; it is to raise ourselves above the vile interests which torment the profane throng that we gather in our Temples. We work without interruption on our improvement, we accustom our spirit to give itself only to great affections, to conceive only ideas of glory and virtue; it is only by thus regulating its inclinations and habits²⁶ that we come to give to our own soul that just equilibrium which constitutes wisdom, that is to say, the science of life.

But this work is painful and demands many sacrifices which you must resolve to make if you are to be admitted to our midst. You must make a firm resolution to work unceasingly for your moral improvement.....

Q. Do you persist in the desire to become a Mason? A -

Yes, sir.

COME, Sir, every society has its laws and every associate has duties to perform, and as it would be unwise to impose obligations upon yourself before you know them, it is the wisdom of this assembly to tell you what your duties will be.

The first will be absolute silence about everything you may have heard and discovered between us, as well as about everything you will hear, see or know afterwards.

The second of your duties, and that which makes Freemasonry the most sacred of bonds, even if it were not the noblest, most formidable and most respectable of the

institutions: this duty, which proceeds from the essence of our being, is to combat the passions which dishonour man and make him so unhappy; to practise the sweetest and most beneficent virtues; to help our brother, to prevent his needs, to alleviate his misfortune; to assist him with our own advice and our own lights.... For what in a profane person would be a rare quality, is in a Mason nothing but the fulfilment of his duties.

Every occasion of being useful which he does not take advantage of is an infidelity, every help which he refuses to his Brother is a perjury: and if tender and consoling friendship also has its cult in our temples, it is less because it is a sentiment than because, being a duty, it can become a virtue in them.

The third of your duties, the obligation of which you shall not enter into until after you have been received as a Mason, shall be to conform in all things to the general statutes of the Order and to the particular laws of this Lodge, and to submit to all that is regularly prescribed in the name of this respectable assembly to which you ask the favour of being admitted.

Now that you know the main duties of a Mason, do you feel the strength and have the unshakable²⁷ resolve to put them into practice?

A Yes, sir.

COME, before we go any further, we demand of you an oath of honour, but this oath must be sworn with a sacred cup. If you are sincere, you may drink with confidence, but if falsehood and dissimulation accompany your promise, do not swear....

Rather put away this cup and fear the swift and terrible effect of this concoction.²⁸

Q - Do you consent to be sworn in?

A Yes, sir.

COME - Have this aspirant approach the altar.

(The Master of Cer & leads him to the foot of the steps of the altar).

COME, brother sacrificer, present to this aspirant the sacred cup so fatal to the perjurer.

.....Drink up!

Repeat your obligation to me: I pledge myself to the most absolute silence about every kind of test to which my mind is given. If I shall falsify my oath and fail in my duties; if only curiosity leads me here,

I consent that the sweetness of this drink may turn to bitterness and its salutary effect turn against me like subtle poison. Drink!

(The VEN gives a big bang, repeated by the VVig and says:)

Come, sir, what do I see? I perceive some alteration in you! Will your conscience deny what your mouth assures you? not the sweetness of this brew turned to bitterness?

Away with the profane!

(He is led out and made to sit among the VVigors).

COME, sir, if you have intended to deceive us, the evil is still remedied for you: it is still possible for you to withdraw. I dismiss, however, the distressing idea that you may ever become unworthy of the opinion we have conceived of you; but I can no silence you: to enter our society, and to assure us of the reality of your vocation, you have great trials to undergo.

No doubt you have heard in the profane world, of the rigour of these trials; but whatever idea you may have formed of them, those that await you still surpass it. Think of it, sir, the time is at hand; and once engaged in the trials, you will no longer be able to escape them.... If you do not feel the strength to endure them, ask to withdraw, there is still time.

... Do you

persist? A. Yes,

sir.

COME, sir, have you well reflected on the consequences of your passage? I warn you for the last time that, although all our trials are mysterious and emblematic, they are no less terrible, and such that many have succumbed to them. Be it yourselves, then, who say that it does not continue ... Do you wish to return to the profane world or do you persist in

becoming a Mason? A. Yes, sir, I persist.

(The VEN gives a clap of the mallet, repeated by the Vigs, and says:)

COME, O Terrible One, take possession of this profane man and make him make his first journey. Strive to return him without accident.

(On this first trip, the driver taps three times on the shoulder of the 2nd Vig, who stands up and says: "Who goes? "29").

He is a layman asking to be received as a Mason!

2nd VIG - How dare you wait for him?

Because he is free and of good morals! 2nd VIG -

Since that is so, let him pass.

(He is taken back between the two Vigs) (The

2nd Vig knocks and says:)

2nd VIG \ - Ven \ M , the first journey is over.

COME, sir, how do you find this first journey?

R - ...

Come, Sir, our trials, as I have told you, are mysterious and emblematic; what have you observed in this journey? what moral reflections has it made you make? in short, under what emblems has it presented itself to the imagination?

R - ...

Come, sir, this first journey³⁰ is the emblem of human life: the tumult of passions, the clash of various interests, the difficulty of undertakings, the obstacles which your adversaries, bent on rejecting you, multiply beneath your steps, all these are represented by the noise and the clatter which have struck your ears, and by the inequality of the route which you have travelled.... Do you wish to face the hazards of a second journey?

A Yes, sir.

(In the course of this second journey, they stop at the first Vig, who stands up and says: "Who goes?)

He is a layman asking to be received as a Mason! 1st

VIG. How dare he expect it?

Because he is free and of good manners!

1st VIG - Since it is so, let it pass and be purified by water.

The 1st Vig knocks and says:

1st VIG \ - VEN \ M , the second journey is over.

VEN - What reflections has this new symbolic journey suggested to you?

R - ...

COME! You have overcome many difficulties; it is a happy omen for the continuance of your trials. These, from which you have emerged, are nothing in comparison with those which you have yet to undergo; you must, at this time, summon up all the strength of your soul, if it is not already exhausted. If, contrary to what I hope, you should succumb to this terrible and perilous journey, we should weep for your fate, pity your misfortune, and sincerely regret that so much zeal, so much constancy, had not been more successful.

Make him make the third journey.

(The same ceremonies are performed as on the other journeys; this time, he stops in front of the VEN and asks the following questions).

COME - Who goes?

He is a profane man asking to be received as a Mason!

VEN - How dare he wait for it?

Because it is free and of good manners.

COME, since this is so, let it pass through the purifying flames so that nothing profane remains in it.

1st VIG - VEN , the third journey is over.

COME, Lord, the flames which have surrounded you have ended the first part of your trials: may your heart burn with love for your fellow men, may charity preside in the future over your words and actions. Never forget this moral precept: "Do not do to another what you would not wish to be to you. Penetrate also this poor precept which Freemasonry believes should be added to it:

"Do unto others as much good as you would have them do unto ".

Lord, I could never praise too highly the spirit you have shown so far; but do not let it desert you: you have not yet reached the end of the road.

your work: the work you have to do, though of a different kind, is only more difficult.

The Order into which you ask the favour of entering may perhaps demand of you that you shed the last drop of your blood; if you feel the courage to offer yourself in holocaust, you must give it that assurance in some other way than by verbal promises: it is by your own blood shed today that all your promises must be sealed.³¹

Do you consent to this?

R - ...

VEN - Where in your body do you consent to have your vein opened?

R \ - ...

Come, Surgeon, do your duty; provide, however, the extent of the sacrifice to the state of strength in which this aspirant finds himself: otherwise the Lodge defers to your wisdom and prudence.

Grace, VEN , human blood is too precious to spill like this!

COME, every step you have taken in the race you have undertaken has been marked by success, and you have not yet reached the end of your trials. Every profane who is received as a Mason ceases to belong to himself; he belongs to an order which is spread over all parts of the globe. And in order that Masonry may make it easier for the Mason to be recognised as such, wherever he takes his steps, and whatever the difference in language, there exists in all the Lodges of the universe, a seal charged with hieroglyphic characters known only to true Masons, which, after having been reddened by fire and applied to the body, imprints upon it an indelible mark. Do you consent to receive this glorious imprint and to be able to say by showing it to him, "I am a Mason:

AM I A FREEMASON TOO?

R - ...

(A candle is blown out and the hot end is applied to the arm).

COME, sir, the time has come for the second of your duties to be put into practice. We have, in this Lodge, unfortunate Masons, widows and orphans whom we daily assist; I am going to appoint next to you a Brother to whom you will say in a low voice what you intend for the relief of these unfortunates: for you must know that the charitable acts of Masons, not being acts of ostentation and vanity, proper both to make the giver proud, and the receiver humiliating, must always be buried in secrecy.³²

Hospital, do your job and tell me quietly...33

I expected no less, sir, from your good heart; the Resp \ L, through me, testifies to you all its gratitude; you can count on that of the unfortunate people whose fate you are going to help to alleviate. You will soon reap the reward of your firmness in trials, and of the pious and beneficent sentiments which you have just manifested.

M ° of Cer ° , return the candidate to the 1st VIG to teach him to take his first step in the angle of a long square³⁴ and then you will make him come to the altar of oaths to take his oath.

(VEN knocks and says:)

Come to your feet and come to order, Brothers, the new initiate is about to take the dread oath. Repeat with me your solemn duty.

OATH

I do solemnly and sincerely swear and promise by my free will, in the presence of the G ° A ° of the U ° and this respectable assembly of Masons³⁵, never to reveal any of the mysteries of the F ° M ° M ° that are to be confided to me, except to a good and lawful H °, or in a regularly constituted L °; never to write them down, trace, engrave, or carve them, or form any character by which these secrets may be disclosed, under pain of having my throat cut, my tongue torn out, and being buried in the sand of the sea, so that the ebb and flow may carry me into eternal oblivion³⁶.

(The Ceremonial Brother leads the candidate back to the portico. The lights are extinguished; two funeral flames are placed at the entrance to the East, one on each side; a man, his hair dishevelled and dishevelled, lies in the middle, face to the ground, as if he were dead.

All the HHs are , armed with naked swords and turned towards the candidate, who is made to enter.

The VEN gives three strokes of the mallet; on the third stroke, the recipient's blindfold is removed and the VEN says:)

These pale and gloomy lights are the gloomy fires that must light the vengeance we reserve for the vile perjurers. These swords, directed against you, are held by as many irreconcilable enemies ready to plunge them into your breast, should you ever be wretched enough to violate your oaths.

(The VEN knocks for the recipient to put the blindfold back on).

COME! Wherever on earth you dared to take refuge, no one could serve you as an asylum: you would carry with you the sign of your crime. The rumour of your reprobation would have preceded you with lightning speed. You would find there Mas enemies of the perjurer and the most terrible punishment would await you.

(All the lights in the Temple are turned back on so that the brightness of the Lodge contrasts with the preceding darkness; the HHs remain armed with swords, but with the point downwards, but always directed towards the candidate).

1st VIG, you upon whom rests one of the pillars of this Temple, now that the courage and dedication of this aspirant have made him victorious in this long struggle between the profane man and the Masonic man, do you judge him worthy to be admitted to our midst?

1st VIG: Yes, come. COME!

What do you ask for him? 1st

VIG - The Great Light! 37

COME - Let light be given to my third stroke of the mallet!

(All HHs should have the tips of their swords pointed at their feet and their faces serene and friendly).

COME (gently). - Let the apparatus of these swords cease to terrify you³⁸. They are no longer directed against you... We have received your oaths... We believe them to be sincere... The happy day of trust and friendship has risen at last for you.... See in us no more than brothers, friends whom you have conquered, and who are ready to fly to your rescue, to use their swords for the defence of your life and your honour.

(The VEN strikes, all the HHs lay down their swords and stand at attention).

Come, lead this new friend to the East to renew his promise.

Do you adhere fully to your first oath, do you confirm sincerely and without restriction the oath you have sworn, and do you swear furthermore to obey faithfully the leaders of our Order in all that they command you which is in accordance with and not contrary to our laws.

R - Yes, sir, I swear.

VEN (holding the sword in his left hand above the recipient's head and the mallet in his right, ready to strike the blade)39.

In the name and under the auspices of the G.G.A. of France, by virtue of the powers vested in me by this R.L., I create, receive and constitute you an Apprentice Mason, first degree of the R.E.A. and A. and a member of the R.L., constituted in the East of Paris under no. 347 and the distinctive title of Thebah.

The VEN gives three equal blows with his mallet on the blade of the , placing it lightly on the head of the recipient and says:

Brother, because, from now , you will no longer be called by any other name among us, come forward and receive from me, on behalf of all my Brothers, the first fraternal kiss.

(After having kissed him, the VEN girded him with a white leather apron, saying:)

Wear this apron: it is the symbol of work; it gives you the right to sit among us and you must never appear in L without wearing it; you will have its baveta raised.

(Handing him a pair of white men's gloves).

Receive these gloves offered to you by your Brothers: never stain their whiteness by dipping your hands in the muddy waters of vice. The hands of a Mason must always remain pure.

(Handing her a pair of white women's gloves).

Women are not admitted to our mysteries, yet we respect them, we honour them; these gloves are intended, not for the one whom you can love most, but for the one who is most entitled to your esteem and respect.

H ere, Masons, in order to recognise each , have signs, a word and a touch.

There are two signs: the sign of order and the sign of recognition.

The sign of order is made as follows: standing upright, bring the right hand flat under the throat, the four fingers together and the thumb apart forming a square, the left arm hanging down; this sign reminds you of the oath you have sworn and the punishment that is attached to its criminal infraction.

The recognition sign: while standing at attention, withdraw the hand horizontally towards the right shoulder and let it fall along the body, the arm stretched out, describing a square.

The touch is like this. Take the right hand of the person to whom you wish to make yourself known, press lightly with the nail of your thumb on the first phalanx of his forefinger, give three equal strokes with an invisible movement: this is the request for the sacred word. The sacred word is Jakin. You must give the sacred word to the guardian of the Temple every time you enter it.40

In the R and A, the apprentice does not have a pass word.

As Ap ÒM , the first degree of the Rite, your age is three years.

Go now, H urselves, to make yourselves recognised as the Ap of the R and A by the 1st and 2nd VIG with the help of the signs, word and touch which I just taught you; they will complete your instruction in this degree.

The Cer ian H ighlighting, led our new H ighlighting to the 1st and 2nd VIG ers.

(When the new initiate has been recognised by the VVIGs, the first one says:)

1st. VIG - VEN , the words, signs and touches of the new HEN are just and perfect.

(The neophyte then goes to dress. When he re-enters L urn, he is taught to call as an Apprentice, is made to march, is led to the rough stone and is made to do his first apprentice's work).

Come, come. M \ Q \ H \, this is for you a day of favor and grace. Take your place at the head of the North column; it is the one you will occupy in this grade; it deserves by your assiduity to our works, and by the practice of the Mas virtues whose obligation you have imposed upon yourself and of which the Brothers will give you the first example; it deserves, I say, to penetrate further into our mysteries and to receive the favour that the L ° never refuses to those who know how to make themselves worthy of it.

(VEN knocks and says:)

Come to your feet and come to order, brothers:

"In the name of the French Government, by virtue of the powers conferred upon me by this R.L., I proclaim the Brother whom you see between the columns to be a member of the R.L. 347 constituted in the East of Paris, under the distinctive title of Thebah.

I invite you to recognise him henceforth as your brother, to give him help and assistance on every occasion, well persuaded that, for his part, he will never forget to fulfil the obligations which he has just contracted towards you.

1st. and 2nd. VVIG, warn the Brothers in your columns as I warn those in the East, that we are going to celebrate by a triple battery, the happy acquisition just made by the Mas and this Resp L., that we are going to celebrate by a triple battery, the happy acquisition just made by the Mas.
\ I would ask you, in , to join you and me for this purpose.

1st VIG, you who decorate the South column, the VEN invites you to join him in celebrating the happy acquisition that has just been made by the Mas and this particular Resp in the person of the Br....

VEN - To me HH, by the sign, drums and acclamation! ... Huzzé! ...
Huzzé! Huzzé! Huzzé! Huzzé! Huzzé! Huzzé! Huzzé! Huzzé! Freedom, Equality, Fraternity!

(Cer's M , who has stayed close to the new initiate, makes him cover the battery).

COME - Cer M, lead our new H to the head of the column of the AApp, where the first place is reserved for him today; henceforth, he will be placed according to his order of admission. Take your seat, H!

The H urs is the one who has the floor!

CLOSURE OF THE WORK

The VEN (after having struck). - 1st and 2nd Vigils. Vig, ask the HHs compose41 your columns if they have any propositions to put forward in the interest of the Order in general or of this workshop in particular.

(If no answer:)

I will circulate the proposition sack at the same time as the charity trunk.42

Please carry out your duties.

(When they have finished, they stand between the two cabbages and the 1st VIG announces them).

VEN (After having struck). - Does any one of you, HH, claim the proposition sack or the beneficent trunk?43

(If no one complains). - In this , HHH approach the East44.

(The VEN reads out the proposals, if applicable, and announces the contents of Hosp trunk (then knocks and says:)45

2nd DIACONO, what is your place in Log?

2nd DIACON - To the right of the 1st Vig, if he so permits.

VEN Why, HEN?

2nd DIACON - To carry his orders to the second watch and to see that the HHs are decently on the Colony.

Where is the 1st Deacon?

1st DIACON - Behind or to the right of the VEN, if he allows it.

VEN - Why, why, HEN?

1st DIACON - To carry his orders to the 1st Vig and all dignitary officers, so that the work may be executed more promptly.

VEN\ - Where's the 2nd Vig? 46

2nd VIG - South. VEN

- Why, why, H?

2nd VIG - To better observe the sun at its meridian, to send the workers from work to recreation, to call them from recreation to work, so that the VEN may receive honour and glory.

VEN\ - Where is the 1st Vig?

1st Vig - West. VEN

"Why, why, HEN?

1st VIG - As the sun sets in the West to close the 's race, so the 1st Vig is there to close the L, pay the workers and send them off happy and satisfied.

VEN\ - Are the workers happy and satisfied?

1st VIG - They testify to it on both sides, VEN.

VEN - Standing , HH.

To the glory of the G.O.U., in the name and under the auspices of the G.O.F., I declare the works in the grade of Après-Masse closed in the Respect constituted to the East of Paris with the no. 347 and the distinctive title of Thebah.

To me, HH, for the sign, the simple battery and the acclamation.

Let us vow to be silent and retire in peace.

ANNEXES

NOTES

1

We have translated couvreur as "guardatemplo" to stick to the common usage Spanish-speaking lodges. The term means "slater" or "tiler", and also "plumber". He is the coverer of the Temple, of the initiatory cavern, the one who guards and protects it, and has the function of "guardian of the threshold", his place in the Lodge being precisely on the portico at the entrance to it, and his attribute is a sword. As to his function according to the A.Y.R.: see beginning of Appendix A and its note a.

In the R\Erish, the duty "of a good Mason and principally of a Vig is "to make sure that the Lodge is well covered, the profane kept away. -literally 'discarded', the avenues guarded and all is in order. The "guarded avenues" refer to the idea of the sacred city, whose centre or heart is the Temple itself. They could also be considered, in one aspect, as a horizontal emanation of "the ways that have been laid out for us" (R\E), appearing as the traditional inheritance received from the ancestors leading to that Centre, where those are "verticalised" by the opening to the metaphysical and acquire their true dimensions or original, i.e. universal, qualities.

On "covering" and "protecting" see R. Guénon: "Luz o la morada de inmortalidad", chap. VI of El Rey del Mundo (Ed. Fidelidad, Bs. As. 1985): the terms designating Heaven have primitively the same meaning: "that which is hidden, covered, veiled, silent, secret".

2

R.O.: "facing the East", which is the place from which the Light comes, which, considered as a symbol of the Spirit and of the universal Intelligence, is to illuminate, that is, to make intelligible - reflecting what the cosmic order symbolises - the opening and all the workings of the Masonic Lodge. The Opening rite is itself a symbol of the cosmogonic development or process, arising from the primordial "chaos" thanks to the action of the Fiat Lux (see R. Guénon: "On two initiatory currencies", chap. XLVI of Appreciations on Initiation.

Ed. CS, Bs. As. 1993). It is this process that reproduces the rite of Initiation or Reception, as will be seen below, and it is fully expressed at the moment of Reception in the Aesthetics (see Appendix). The link between the polar symbolism and the solar symbolism is present in several ways, despite the variations, in the ritual of the three Degrees, and also in the architecture of the Lodge. (R footnote 44)

3

East and West, North and South are called in other forms of the East and West, Septentrion and Middy. But these last two, and the first of them above all - Septem triones: "Seven Oxen" or Ursa Major, the second corresponding to the Meridian or solar Zenith - refer at the outset more to the sky and less to the quadrants of the earth's surface.

4

Although it does not appear here, this is the moment, in the Rise, when after having "made the Stars visible" by lighting the symbolic Pillars of "Wisdom", "Strength" and "Beauty", from the light of the Altar (Venerable: "May Wisdom preside over the construction of our Building!" The Venerable Master orders the Worshipful Master to open the "Book of the Sacred Law" and the appearance of the "Three Great Lights", followed by the "unrolling", "unfolding" or "tracing" of the "Lodge Chart", the symbolic and visual synthesis of the Degree. Once the Chart has been unfolded, the questions to the Officers begin: "How old are you? Vig, how old are you?"; "What is your place in the Lodge?".

The outline of the "Lodge Square", which has been considered as an image of the "Sacred Earth" (Denys Roman), stands out in the Emulation Rite, where its outline has a particularly geometrical development, which is accompanied by the symbolic description of the Lodge. See pp. 49-50 here, where part of this text is reproduced. The location of the Lodge Square according to the Rite of Emulation corresponds, according to the temple-human body analogy, to the centre of the pavement of the former and to the navel (omphalos) of the latter, while the altar always corresponds to the heart of the temple and of man.

5

The "jewels" of the Deacons are - at least at present in some English Lodges - two winged figures (helmet and feet) of Hermes-Mercury, holding the Caduceus in the left hand, the forefinger of the right hand pointing to a point on the vertical of his head, in one case higher than in the other. Their attribute in Lodge is the staff or staff of a traveller or master of ceremonies. The correspondence with the role of messenger, teacher and guide of this Deity is evident in the role of the Deacons, especially during the Reception.

6

To carry orders from the First Warden in the west to the Second Warden in the south and elsewhere in the Lodge, as he directs, and to see that the Lodge is covered."

7

To carry orders from the Worshipful Master in the East to the First Warden in the West and elsewhere in the Lodge, as he may direct; to introduce and clothe all visiting Brethren; to receive and conduct candidates."

8

In other forms of the R\EO it is said: "in order that they may profit and rejoice".

9

to help the Venue close the , pay the workers, and make sure they are satisfied".

To assist the Worshipful Master in opening and closing his Lodge, to pay the workmen their wages, if any are due, and to see that none go away dissatisfied, if it is in my power to prevent it, harmony being the strength of all institutions, and more especially of this one of ours".

10

The Masonic Lodge is described as an image of the world, traced by the path of the sun, which orders and thus engenders space and time, tracing the cosmic form, which has already begun by separating light from darkness. "Logia", which comes from Logos, is the same as the Sanskrit term loka: world, plane or universe, and thus appears, curiously enough, in an Apprentice Instruction belonging to the Grand Lodge of the Valley of Mexico.

11

In the RGS it is "midday on the dot" when the work is already open. The French plein (midi plein) clearly indicates the fullness of sunlight that occurs when the sun is high in the sky, which also corresponds to an apparent "stop". This designated point of the day corresponds to the Summer Solstice in the year, as midnight to the Winter Solstice, and both ends of the annual cycle to the "Gate of Men" and the "Gate of the Gods", to which those of the "cavern", both "macrocosmic" and "microcosmic", refer, the second opening, thanks to the "third birth", being the one through which one actually exits the cosmic cavern. See R. Guénon, *Símbolos Fundamentales de la Ciencia Sagrada* Eudeba, Bs. As. 1988), chap. XXXV: "Las Puertas Solsticiales", and in general those included in the section "Simbolismo de la forma cósmica". On the other hand, the vertical of these two points, which divides the cycle in two and unites it at its extremes, symbolically marks the axis of a present, between the past and the future, an image of the non-principal time.

Masonic works are accomplished from Noon to Midnight "on the dot", thus describing the downward arc of sunlight, from its zenith (noon), to its nadir (midnight). This would also have to do, though not exclusively, with the old operative expression that the Masonic Lodge is "on the highest of hills and in the deepest of valleys". See also "Concerning Freemasonry", a community work appearing in *Vers la Tradition* and published in *SYMBOLOS* No. 5, where Masonic work appears as a tracing back to the origin, to the Golden Age, or Primordial state of man and the world.

12

The communication of the Sacred Word, which unites the Ven and the two VVigens, is a fact analogous to the meeting of the three rods, of respective proportions 3, 4 and 5, with which the Three Grand Masters of a working Lodge form the Pythagorean right triangle, a meeting without which the work in that Lodge cannot be opened. See R. Guénon, *Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie et le*

Compagnonnage, T. II (Ed. Traditionnelles, Paris 1986): "Parole perdue et mots substitués" (English translation in El Taller, Revista de Estudios Masónicos). In other forms of the R.E., this union is produced by the light (or fire) which the Venom takes from the Altar and gives to the VVigators who receive it at the foot of the East, to light the "Stars" of the Pillars which surround the Lodge Square and also form a right-angled triangle. The fourth corner, where there is no Pillar, corresponds to the Northeast.

13

Since it is time, since we have the age, and since everything is in accordance with the rite, you will inform the men who decorate your Columns, as I do those of the East, that I am going to open the work of this Respected Lodge".

14

Denys Roman writes (René Guénon et les destins de la Franc-Maçonnerie, p. 182; Ed. de l'œuvre, Paris 1982) that Guénon pointed out in this respect "that the Venerable should not uncover himself when he pronounces the name of the Great Architect of the Universe", and that if he must always remain covered it is "because it is considered that he always works in the degree of Master, and that this last degree having a marked Hebrew character [properly 'Solomonic' says Guénon elsewhere] everything must be done with his head covered".

15

Some consider that this acclamation would be translated as "Long live the King", others that it is linked to the idea of "Strength" and therefore to that of "Life". See Jules Boucher: La Symbolique Maçonnique, pp. 345-346; Dervy-Livres, Paris 1983. In the Rééé the acclamation is: "Vivat! Vivat! Semper vivat!". According to the Tuileur de Vuillaume (1830; Du Rocher, Monaco 1990), in the French or Modern Rite it is: "Vivat! vivat! et in aeternum vivat!".

16

In The Three Distinct Knocks (1760), once the HHs are seated, the instruction (ritual questions and answers) of the Degree begins (Villard de Honnecourt, No. 13, p. 111. Neuilly-sur-Seine, France, 1983).

17

When it is a question of a Visitor, the following dialogue is established, very similar to the one of the R\A, which we quote from the document Masonry Dissected (1730), whose version, which we translate from the one offered by V. de Honnecourt in his No. 8, is older and more complete (see here a direct translation of the complete document): "- Where do you come from? - From the Holy Lodge of St. John; - What recommendations do you bring? - The recommendations of the just and respectable Brethren and Companions, of the just, respectable and Holy Lodge of St. John, whence I come, and who greet you thrice with a good heart; - What do you come here to do? - I come not to do my own will, but to subdue my passion, to put into practice the rules of Masonry, and by doing this to progress every day". The two St. Johns correspond to the two visible faces of Janus, patron of the Roman collegia fabrorum and God of Initiation into the Mysteries. See R. Guénon: "The Solstitial Symbolism of Janus", chapter XXXVII of Fundamental Symbols... and "Solve et Coagula", chapter VI of The Great Triad (Obelisk, Barcelona 1986).

18

It is also called his "philosophical testament". The profane is in the "Chamber of Reflection", where he has been led after having obtained the favourable "scrutinies" or "aplomations", and has been told that he is to undergo "what the ancients called the Ordeal of the Earth". Driven "into darkness" and "stripped of metals". (See R. Guénon: "The Cavern and the Labyrinth", chap. XXIX of Fundamental Symbols... and "On Initiatic Trials" and "On Initiatic Death", chaps. XXV and XXVI of Appreciations... The "Chamber of Reflection" is symbolically situated in the "interior of the earth". If it is considered to be situated in the very vertical of the temple, it would correspond to the crypt. The alchemical and hermetic symbolism - clearly present in the symbols of this "Chamber" or "Cabinet" - is not to be found in the Aegean, and we believe it is generally so in the English Rituals, so to speak.

19

Neither naked nor clothed but in a decent state, deprived of the use sight and stripped of all metal".

20

Or that he is "born of a free woman" as it is said in some of the old documents.

21

"Neophyte" means "new born" (Tuileur de Vuillaume), and also "new plant". In other rituals he is called Neophyte only after the oath he has taken before the "Three Great Lights", even if he does not see them, being first "Candidate", "Postulant" and "Recipient". In the Tuileur quoted above, it is insisted that the correct designations are: "Candidate", "Recipient" when he has been admitted to the tests, and "Neophyte" when he has received the "Light".

22

This last point is no longer a moral "coating" or "covering" of Principles in particular applications, but a complete intrusion of "democratic" values, i.e. quantitative values, which take shape in the French Revolution (although they come from much earlier) and become established throughout the 19th century until they become, in appearance, an object of quasi-religious "worship" and in reality an instrument of the profane, constituting in fact one of its "dogmas". All this is modern "politics", devoid of true - transcendent - Principles, and has nothing to do with the sacred and much less with the initiatory, being subject to the vagaries of time and the fashions of thought, since it is precisely a matter of accessing the "Non-Action" of the Principle. This is not to say that the idea of justice and balance is alien to Freemasonry, and it is perhaps symptomatic that it cannot exist in authoritarian regimes, perhaps because of the notion of Liberty, the first of its mottoes. Moreover, it is evident that the greater cannot be produced by the lesser, but rather the other way round. True power does not emanate from individuals as such, nor from their numbers, but from the One who has traced the very Law of the Cosmos, and to it all beings are subject, by their very nature, regardless of their translation into the forms of a "traditional" society, which is also a symbolic expression, and which carries implicitly the possibilities of teaching and realisation. See R. Guénon, The Crisis of the Modern World (Obelisco, Barcelona 1982) and Etudes sur l'Hindouisme: chap. "Sanâtana Dharma" (Ed. Traditionnelles, Paris 1989). The Law corresponds to the Squadron, hence its importance in the Apprentice Degree. Precisely, the Freedom (of the Self) corresponds to the "liberation" from the "Law", which is ultimately that of manifestation, which can only be done in accordance with the Law itself, which is that of the Logos. See R. Guénon: "Noción metafísica de la libertad", last chapter of Los estados múltiples del Ser (Obelisco, Barcelona 1987).

23

The "Ratio" could be considered here, the same which Robert Fludd places, on the symbolic scale linking earth and heaven, immediately below the "Intellectus", though considering here a restricted field within the distinctive and reflex knowledge which is its sphere. We make mention of an engraving, from his work *Utriusque cosmii Historia*, T. II, which is reproduced in No. 6 of *SYMBOLOS* (p. 174). Also Virgil's words to Dante at the end of Canto 27 of "Purgatorio".

24

From the root *vir*. This quality is not exclusively "masculine", hence, for example, Athena - or Minerva - is even called "virile goddess"; she is, by the way, patron of the arts of war, science and crafts.

25

The themes of these questions and answers, which point out and trace themes of meditation, obviously contain a moral sense - and there is indeed also a Masonic moral, which is an expression in its order of that same "architectural" Law, e.g.: "do not offend your Hercules, praise him even less" - but this is not exclusive. They could be seen as an "exoteric and 'moralised'" version of symbols of another order, as R. Guénon puts it with regard to the "myth of Hercules between Virtue and Vice". See "The solstitial symbolism of Janus", chapter XXXVII of *Fundamental Symbols* The mention of the frame, or "framing", as an image of the fixing of an "order" is analogous to that of the establishment of limits for a construction, as well as to the alchemical "separation" and is complemented by that of rhythm.

26

It should be noted the notion of "rhythm" implicit here, the Rule being one of Tools of the Apprentice, the symbolic measure of which is "24 inches", as R. Guénon points out in *Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie et le Compagnonnage* T II (p. 179), who indicates in the same place that the correct symbolic division of this measure is into two equal parts.

27

The "force" would be in correspondence with the earth and the raw material, and the "resolution", or imprint of the "Will of Heaven" with the alchemical Sulphur. See R. Guénon, "Sulphur, Mercury' and 'Salt'", Chapter XII of *The Great Triad*.

28

Among the rites of passage from the profane to the sacred world, which constitute the first part of the Masonic reception, the one mentioned at this point retains a remarkable symbolic significance, beginning with the very name "sacred cup" given to what is also called the "cup of bitterness" or "cup of libations", with which the oath is to be sworn. The allusion to the "sacrificing" Brother is also very significant, for what is really being ritualised is the death, abandonment or stripping of the illusory profane personality, , in effect, entails a "sacrifice" on the part of the aspirant, that is, an "act" or "sacred doing" (*sacrum facere*). On the other hand, it is no less interesting to note the alchemical character of the ceremony, by the allusion further on to the "subtle poison" into which the "salutary effect" is "converted", and certainly, contrary to what is stated in D. Ligou's *Dictionnaire de la Franc-Maçonnerie*, this does not only constitute an "act" or "sacred act" (*sacrum facere*), but also a "sacrifice" on the part of the aspirant, i.e. an "act" or "making sacred" (*sacrum facere*).

a "lesson" but exactly an "initiatory teaching" as is proper to what is truly a symbol (see "Of the initiatory teaching", chap. XXXI of *Appreciations...*, trans. in *SYMBOLOS* No. 4). Alchemically, the "science poisons" is also the "science of remedies". It is interesting to quote J.-M. Ragon (although the ceremony is different) which appears in J. Boucher's *La Symbolique Maçonnique*, pp. 50-51: "Brother, the brew given to you is, by its bitterness, an emblem of the afflictions of life and of the obstacles which precede Initiation or the discovery of truth. Let it be to you a brew of Lethe, or of forgetfulness in regard to false maxims drawn from among the profane. The second brew is pure; you have found it sweeter. Let it be a brew of Mnemosine or of memory for the lessons you will receive from wisdom" (*Cours Philosophique et interprétatif des Initiations anciennes et modernes*, 1841).

29

In other versions, after the silence at the blow of the mallet of the Orient, the Vigor places his mallet on the chest of the Recipient until he lets him pass.

30

This journey is expressly designated, in other rituals of the R\ÉEA, as the "ordeal of the Air", just as here the next two constitute the "ordeal of Water" and "of Fire" respectively, and the sojourn in the "Chamber of Reflection" is regarded as the "ordeal of the Earth". We would like to recall that the word "element" refers, in the context of initiatory tests, to the idea of "simplicity". Such purifying ordeals have no other function than to bring the soul to a state of complete "virginity" or "raw material" which makes it susceptible to the "initiatory light" or "spiritual influence". See René Guénon: "On initiatory proofs" and "On two initiatory currencies", chaps. XXV and XLVI of *Appreciations...*

31

The "test of blood", as shown here, which represents the last sacrificial act of the aspirant prior to the initiatory oath, is a practice which originated in 19th century French Freemasonry and has almost disappeared today. In other forms of the R\Érnary only the first question is to be found. In the Rite, it is produced at the very moment of the Oath, when at the third stroke on the compass its point (the other is held by the Candidate with his left hand, as in the previous Rite) presses the chest of the Recipient and the effusion of a liquid that imitates blood is produced. Although some authors have pointed out - perhaps too blithely - the somewhat "theatrical" nature of this part of the reception (see on this subject *Ibid.*, chap. XXVIII: "The symbolism of the theatre"), we must nevertheless recognise the symbolic value that blood retained in the ancient initiatory rites of many traditions. We understand that here it is a matter of establishing a "consanguineous" pact with Freemasonry itself, of the symbol of the surrender or donation of life (since blood is the vehicle of the vital soul) to what it represents, as an expression of the Divine Principle which animates it, and in which there is no acceptance of persons, points to the axial character of the sacrifice. As it is said in the Gospel, "Whoever would save his life [his soul] will lose it" (Matthew XVI-25). See also *Ibid.*, chap. XLVII: "Verbum, Lux et Vita". As well as: "The 'ether in the heart'", "The idea of the centre in the ancient traditions", "The mustard seed", chaps. LXXIV, VIII and LXXIII of *Fundamental Symbols*.

32

Cf. Matthew, VI-3.

33

Among the Officers who make up a Masonic Lodge, the Hospitaller embodies the virtue of Charity, as attested by the heart on the jewel of his necklace (in the R.E. it is a swollen heart). He is the custodian of the "Widow's Trunk" or "Charity Trunk" intended to provide for the financial needs of members of the Lodge and their families who are handicapped for health or other . He is also the link that the Lodge maintains with sick Lodge Members who are unable to attend the Work. We transcribe the following from the A.A:

After having been clad in the apron and returned to the East before the V. M., the V. M. says to him: "Br. Gabe (see note c Appendix), according to an ancient custom, adopted among Masons, it is necessary that you be requested to donate something of a metallic kind or nature, not for its intrinsic value, but that it may be deposited among the relics in the archives of this Lodge, as a memento of when you were made a Mason. Anything, Brother, which you may have with you, of a metallic nature, will be gratefully received: a button, a pin, a nickel or dime, or anything, my Brother." The candidate observes that he has nothing on him, that he is totally naked, for his driver had stripped him of everything before he entered the Lodge. Perhaps he asks to be able to go to where his clothes are so that he can contribute, which the V.M. refuses, of course. After a few moments of suspense, he says: "Brother Gabe, you are indeed an object of charity: almost naked, without a penny, not even a button or pin to offer to this Lodge. Let this, my Brother, have a last effect upon your mind and conscience; and remember, if you ever see a friend, but more especially a Brother, in such a condition of destitution, that you must contribute as liberally to his support and relief, as his necessities seem to demand, and your ability permits, without any material offence to yourself or your family." After this the candidate is "returned to the place from whence he came and invested with that which he had before been unclothed" before returning to the Lodge and being placed in the Northeast, the cardinal point where the foundation stone of the building was formerly laid. This is the symbolism of stripping, an image of the dependence of every being on the Principle, represented in the sacred space of the Lodge, and also linked to the symbolism of charity insofar as it corresponds to the "upper vertex of the initiatory triangle". It is added in the Duncan's Ritual: "The Master, assisted by the 1st Vig, (who has clothed the Neophyte with the apron and taught him how to wear it) lays the first corner stone of a beautiful masonry" (the underlining is thus in the text). See R. Guénon: "The Cornerstone", "Lapsit Exillis", "El-Arkân", chaps. XLIII to XLV of Fundamental Symbols...

34

This is the first teaching in constructive symbolism which the candidate receives. It is the angled or square "ritual step" with which the Mason must always enter the Temple. The "long square" is, in fact, the shape of the Masonic Lodge. As it is said in one of the old preserved rituals, The Three Distinct Knocks: "he taught me to step on the first degree (or) of a right angle oblong square". See V. de Honnecourt, No. 13, pp. 113-114.

35

Although not stated here, the solemn oath is taken before the "Three Great Lights" of Freemasonry, which are the Book of the Sacred Law, the Square and the Compass. This is invariably the case in all Masonic Rites without exception, thus testifying to the truly "central" role which in all Masonic Rites they possess.

the "Great Lights", inasmuch as they synthesise the very essence of Freemasonry. See p. 126 of No. 10 of V. de Honnecourt. The presence of these "Lights" constitutes a true Landmark.

36

The Three Distinct Knocks and the ritual The Three Distinct Knocks are perhaps most explicit in this regard, for in them it is said "to have the throat cut and the tongue torn from the root". See R. Guénon: "The Roots of the Plants", chapter LXII of Fundamental Symbols It is, in any case, the deprivation of speech and with it the articulation of the word and its generative power, in which one also participates through the sacred word (even if it is "spelt" by the Apprentice), fundamental in the oral transmission and in the recognition by the Order, by the Mysteries it represents, and therefore in the field of initiatory realisation. On the other hand, the idea of the "tearing apart" or "dismemberment" of the recipient (The Masonry Dissected includes "the heart torn from the left breast and the body reduced to ashes scattered on the surface of the Earth") is common in various initiations, such as shamanic initiations, although they are not visualised as "punishments" or "punishments" (to which the rite of penance corresponds, as a form of "gathering of the dispersed"), but as suffering, tearing and death, whether they refer to ritual torture or to the direct action of the Gods or intermediary spirits. All this implies a symbolic death, i.e. the possibility of a "liberation", provided that the "journey through hell" is fulfilled by a "mandate" or celestial order (which is ultimately the nature of initiation in all its forms), in which case it may reflect an archetypal event, with all the force that this implies and the possibility of a "new birth". See R. Guénon, Fundamental Symbols..., ch. XLVI: "Gathering of the dispersed", and also The Divine Comedy, Inferno, canto II: before and after "There is in Heaven a gentle lady". Likewise, the sea is understood here as the domain of the 'lower waters', or sublunar world, from which one can only escape by recovering the memory of the sacred or truly real. In The Three Distinct Knocks it is specified in the oath: "at the distance of a cable from the shore"; if this cable is a loop, the initiatory loop by its link with the "cable-tow" (see Appendix A and its note e), the path can be retraced, by "rectification". See also R. Guénon, "Ligatures and Knots", chap. LXVIII of Fundamental Symbols...

37

By this designation it is indicated here that it is not the sensible light, but intelligible, spiritual or pneumatic light, of which it is a symbol. See R. Guénon: "Verbum, Lux et Vita", quoted above. And likewise the reception in the A.

38

These swords are also lightning bolts aimed at the heart.

39

In the sword-mallet combination, the former is sometimes considered as a symbol of spiritual authority and the latter as a symbol of temporal power, both of which are brought together in the fulfilment of their ritual functions. This is insofar as they are seen as complementary in the fact that they are combined in the reception according to the R\EAS, which is not the only one, but perhaps the one that has most taken up the heritage of chivalric initiations (see the very interesting article by Denys Roman in Vers la Tradition No. 56, "Remarques sur la Tradition", "Remarques sur la Tradition No. 56, "Remarques sur la Tradition", "Remarques sur la Tradition"). 56, "Remarques sur quelques symboles maçonniques, II") where he concludes in the almost certain substitution of the palette for the flaming sword, the latter image being analogous to that of the serpent as a symbol of the Word. The connection of the 'chivalrous' with the 'artisanal' is

This is manifested in the community of symbols in the heraldry of both, thanks above all to the hermetic symbolism present in the coats of arms of warriors and tradesmen, which are linked to the identity of the "Great Work" with the "Royal Art". Moreover, the mallete itself symbolises a double power and is assimilated like other double-edged weapons - the sword, the axe, the hammer - to lightning (See R. Guénon: *Fundamental Symbols...*, chaps. XXV and XXVI: "The 'stones of lightning'" and "Symbolic weapons"). Perhaps it is because of the inappropriate use of a straight sword instead of a flaming sword that the symbolism of the latter is lost sight of, in reality sword and mallete are symbols of a power "unique in its essence and double in its manifestation of contrary appearance" (Ibid. and also *The Great Triad*, ch. VI: "Solve et coagula").

40

By instruction in the secrets of the Degree, the Neophyte is incorporated into the craft, which is supplemented by the giving of the symbolic tools. The signs being Squares, Levels and Plumbs (or "right angles, horizontal, and perpendicular"), he is introduced to the possibility of Temple Building or spiritual regeneration. The work of the Apprentice consists, according to the First Degree Ritual Instruction of the Rite of the Rite, in "roughing the Rough Stone, in order to strip it of its roughness and bring it closer to a form consonant with its destiny". See R. Guénon: *Appreciations...*, chap. XXXI: "On the Initiatic Teaching".

41

In other forms of the Rite, the expression "which decorate your Columns" is used. The term "column" has a rich symbolic meaning in Freemasonry, referring to the idea of the verticality of the axis around which the construction of the Temple is erected. The expression "Raising of Columns" refers to the creation of a Lodge, to its establishment or installation, also called "Lighting of Lights", while "Casting down of Columns" corresponds to its dissolution. It can be said that the Mason - the initiate - is also a "column". See R. Guénon, *Fundamental Symbols...*, chaps. included in the section "Axial and Passage Symbolism".

42

Instead of "Beneficent Trunk" we also say "Widow's Trunk", an expression much more Masonic in its traditional use.

43

In other Rituals of the Ritual, the "Sack of Propositions" is not offered to the claim by a H., remaining "under mallete" in the hands of the V., although he can make known at the same moment the "frontispiece" of the "engraved" or "engraved plates" -or "traced" as it is the case- that it contains, if he considers it appropriate. Likewise, in other cases, it is the Hospitaller who counts or in any case attests to the "profane medals" contained in the Saco or Tronco de Beneficencia, which are noted down by the Secrés and collected by the Hospitaller.

44

It is also said "go up to the East" because it is elevated above the floor of the Temple, either by three or seven steps. Cf. note 2.

45

Here, in other forms of the R\E\A\A, the realisation of the "Chain of Union" is given, after the announcement that "the day's work is over": "Today's work is over, we have the right to rest. Following the

(He puts his right hand to his heart) and unite in Fraternity. Stand up HH, let us form the Chain of Union, take off your gloves". The chain is formed: "right arm over left, feet square, bare hands [joining as links], among all HHs present, around the Lodge Square". The position of the arms and hands reproduces the links of the "chain" which encircles the Lodge under the starry vault. "All observe a moment of recollection". This is the moment when, according to custom, a prayer or invocation is made (which normally refers to the Light - initiatory - that has governed the Works and which must also be present "outside" the Temple, "remaining however hidden from profane gazes"). The chain is broken after the arms have been shaken three times, and all return to their places. The Brothers take their seats at the order of the V\M. See: "Two Masonic themes: 'With joy' and 'Chain of Union' ", ch. 33 of Symbol, Rite, Initiation (Seven Master Masons. Obelisco, Barcelona 1992) as well as R. Guénon: "The 'Chain of Union' " ch. LXV of Fundamental Symbols...

46

In other versions of the R.V., instead of this question, the V. addresses the 2nd Watch: "Where do the Apprentice Masons receive their wages? And later, when the 1st Vig replies that it is "Midnight sharp", it being "time to dismiss them", the close of the Lodge Work is proceeded with. The "Book of the Sacred Law" is closed (and with it the "Three Great Lights" disappear), the "Lodge Table" is erased, gathered up or rolled up, and the "Little Lights" are extinguished: "Let Peace reign on Earth! Let Love reign among men! Let Joy be in the hearts!". With them the lights of the Lodge and finally the luminous Delta are extinguished.

THE SYMBOLISM OF FREEMASONRY

FRANCISCO ARIZA

Introduction

In this magazine dedicated to universal symbolism, we could not fail to reflect on the important symbolism of Freemasonry, which represents, together with the Hermetic-Alchemical tradition, the only non-religious initiatory path that still survives in Europe and its cultural area of influence. This is despite the fact that many Freemasons today have little or no knowledge of the symbolic and initiatory nature of their Order. Some even go so far as to deny this essential aspect of the Order, believing that it only pursues social and philanthropic aims. Still others see in the symbolic richness of Freemasonry only an inexhaustible source to feed their own "occult" fantasies, which are so fashionable nowadays. Undoubtedly, this impersonation of the true aims of Freemasonry and, consequently, the infiltration of profane "ideas", could only happen in an age which, like ours, is living in the deepest intellectual and spiritual darkness such as it never known before.

We must make it clear that we are speaking here of traditional Masonry, that is to say, of that which keeps alive and permanent, through symbols, rites and myths, the links with the cosmogonic and metaphysical realities emanating from the Great Primordial Tradition, of which Masonry is (in truth) an offshoot. In our understanding, and considered in this way, Freemasonry, like any other traditional organisation, offers to fallen and ignorant man the elements necessary to bring about his own regeneration and spiritual evolution.

The symbolic and ritual structure of Freemasonry recognises numerous inheritances from the various traditions that have succeeded each other in the West for at least the last two thousand years. And this fact, far from appearing as mere syncretism, reveals in this Tradition a vitality and a capacity for synthesis and doctrinal adaptation which has earned it the name of "traditional ark of symbols". Over the course of time, all these inheritances have been integrated into the symbolic universe of Freemasonry, moulded to its own particular idiosyncrasies. Coming from a tradition of builders, it should not be surprising that Freemasonry fulfils the function of a receiving ark, for it is precisely construction or building that has no other function than to "shelter" or "shelter" from the elements or inclemency of time; but, similarly, when construction is understood as something sacred, it is not surprising that Masonry has the function of a receiving ark. -and this is the case - it is clear that it does no more than protect, and separate from the profane world (the outer darkness) all that corresponds to the strictly spiritual and metaphysical domain. On the other hand, this is precisely the role of the symbols that allude to the ideas of receptivity and concentration, such as the ark itself, the cup, the cave or the temple.

Being, as we have said, an initiatory path of craft origins, Freemasonry has had a special sensitivity towards all the traditional currents with which it has come into contact. Thus, in addition to Hermeticism, among these currents we should mention those deriving from Christianity, Judaism and the ancient Greco-Roman tradition, and more specifically from Pythagoreanism. We could also mention the even more ancient Egyptian tradition, especially with regard to the cosmogonic symbols related to construction, since, as is well known, ancient Egypt is in fact one of the sacred centres from which much of the knowledge that helped to shape, through its influence on the Greek philosophers, the conception of the world proper to Western culture emerged. In any case, the Egyptian heritage is transmitted to Freemasonry mainly through Hermetic Alchemy and Pythagoreanism.

However, it should not be concluded from this that Freemasonry is the "result" of the confluence of all these traditions. If it were, Freemasonry would be a kind of collage or archaeological museum where all the relics of the past found here and there, and catalogued according to the respective antiquity of each of them, would have a place. Obviously we do not mean that when we speak of the multi-secular heritage received by Freemasonry. Each tradition is legitimised and shaped by a "revelation" of a divine order that occurred, paradoxically enough, in a mythical, a-historical and a-temporal time.¹

This revelation is "unique" for each traditional form, which is constituted from it, giving it its particular "stamp" or "mark", its structure, and therefore a function and a destiny to fulfil on the stage of the time of history. Another thing is that, for whatever circumstances, one tradition receives from another (or others) certain influences through contact or similarity, which has often been inevitable and even necessary. But in no way does this mean that one tradition "transforms" into another, for, as with any living being, each one has a birth, a development, a maturity, and finally a death. What has been called the "Transcendent Unity of Traditions" is quite different from mere "uniformity". It means, fundamentally, that each and every one of them proceeds from a single source (the Primordial Tradition), which manifests itself not in the form or garb which they may take due to circumstances of time and place, but precisely in that which constitutes the "perennial wisdom" contained in the innermost core and the "perennial wisdom" contained in the innermost core of the Tradition.

central to each tradition. What is true of Freemasonry is that has no religious character, which has made it possible for it to adapt to all the traditions, religious or otherwise, with which it has been associated throughout history. Its initiatory symbolism, referring to the art of building, among other things, has served as a protective cover, while allowing it to adapt to any religious or exoteric "dogma" without coming into conflict with it.

An example of this can be found in the relations which Freemasonry maintained throughout the Western Middle Ages with the ecclesiastical power and with the various initiatory organisations of Christian esotericism. On the other hand, if Freemasonry, in its characteristic spirit of fraternity and tolerance, had not accepted these diverse heritages, they would certainly have been lost. And it is possibly this receptive capacity that has contributed to the illusion of syncretism that some people mistakenly attribute to it. However, the opposite is true, for Freemasonry, by "gathering together the dispersed", has merely preserved in its symbolic-ritualic structures the "memory" of these multiple heritages, thereby fulfilling a "totalising" role that has its *raison d'être* (and a profound *raison d'être*) in this end of cycle that we are living through. In this sense, and just as in Noah's "ark" all the "species" that were to be preserved during the cataclysm between two cyclical periods were enclosed so that they would not perish; the Masonic "ark" also holds all that is valid to be preserved until the present cycle ends, and which will constitute spiritual "germs" that will develop during the course of the future cycle. Precisely this recapitulatory function assumed by traditional Freemasonry leads us to believe that it will subsist until the consummation of the cycle, which on the other hand, as one Masonic author points out, "... is symbolically expressed by the ritual formula according to which the Lodge of St. John is in the valley of Jehoshaphat", which, we add, is where what in Christianity is called the "Last Judgement" will symbolically take place.² In the same sense, it is also said that the "Last Judgement" of the Masons is the place where the "Last Judgement" will take place. In the same sense, it is also said that the Masonic Lodge stands "... in the highest of mountains and in the deepest of valleys", thus alluding to the beginning of the cycle (when Paradise stood on top of the mountain of Purgatory) and to its end (when the Truth of knowledge, represented by the Edenic state, "withdrawing" into itself has become invisible to most men, hiding in the "underworld"). It should be said, to complete this cyclical symbolism, that the valley corresponds to the cavern, which, being inside the mountain, is therefore situated on the same axis that connects the top of the one with the base of the other, thus linking the "highest" (the beginning) with the "lowest" (the end).

The Creator as geometrician and architect

Having said this, which we believe has been necessary in order to clear up certain confusions that exist around Freemasonry, we will now attempt to explain some of the symbolic inheritance that this Order has received from other traditional forms that are still in force or have disappeared. From Hermeticism, Freemasonry has taken, in part, the richness of alchemical symbolism, which includes the teachings and experiences of the processes of psychological transmutation that lead from the profane state to spiritual realisation. The symbolism of the elements, related to the purifying energies of nature, is of the utmost importance in the rite of Masonic initiation. In this sense, the Masonic "Chamber of Reflection" is the same, and fulfils the same symbolic function as the Hermetic *athanor*: an enclosed, intimate space where the changes of regenerative states exemplified by the gradual "subtilisation" of the dense, chaotic matter of the alchemical compost take place. Likewise, the various symbolic objects found in the "Chamber of Reflection" are almost all

of alchemical and hermetic origin, such as the three cups containing sulphur, mercury and salt, not forgetting the initials V.I.T.R.R.I.O.L.3, and the banner with the words "Vigilance and Perseverance", which allude to the state of permanent vigilance and patience with which the alchemist must arm himself in his operations. On the other hand, there are very interesting analogies between the process of transmutation of the alchemical "chaotic matter" and the roughing out of the "rough stone" in Freemasonry, so that a totally coherent transposition can be made between the alchemical symbolism and the constructive and architectural symbolism. Likewise, hermetic-alchemical initiation is equally present in the three Masonic degrees of apprentice, companion and master, which reproduce the three stages of the "Great Work", which include a death, a rebirth and a resurrection, respectively. Finally, the Hermetic laws of correspondences and analogies between the macrocosm and the microcosm are summarised and synthesised in the general scheme of the Masonic temple or Lodge, the true symbolic image of the world.

Lodge Cadre. Companion Degree

If the Hermetic Tradition has left its mark on Freemasonry, that of Pythagoreanism is certainly no less important, and we could even say that it is, together with Judeo-Christianity, one of the most significant, to the extent that it is not possible to understand what Freemasonry is without this Pythagorean reference. Indeed, numerous Masonic symbols denote their Pythagorean origin, or at any rate show a palpable identity with some of the most important symbols of the brotherhood founded by the Master of Samos. Such is, for example, the well-known "pentagrammatic star" or pentalpha, of utmost importance in the symbolism of the Companion degree (where it is called the "flaming star"), and which the Pythagoreans regarded as their sign of recognition and an emblem of the fully regenerated man.

But it is in sacred arithmetic, i.e. in the symbolism of numbers in its cosmogonic and metaphysical aspects, that the presence of Pythagoreanism in Freemasonry can be most clearly observed. Both traditions emphasise the qualitative sense of numbers, closely linked to geometric symbolism, which in turn is directly related to the construction of the outer and inner temples. In this respect, it should be noted that Plato had an inscription engraved on the pediment of the Academy of Athens which read: "Let no one enter here unless he is a geometrician", a sentence unanimously attributed to the Pythagoreans, and which could well be engraved on the entrance portico to the Masonic Lodge. Likewise the Unity or divine Monad was symbolised among the Pythagoreans by Apollo, the primordial geometrical god who, by means of the "invariable law of number", which he extracts from the musical chords of his lyre, establishes the model or prototype by which the harmony of universal life is governed. And is he not, in the end, the Masonic Great Architect, who with the square and the compass determines the structure and limits of heaven and earth, the same as the Pythagorean Apollo?

As far as Christianity is concerned, there is no doubt that many important doctrinal elements integrated into Masonic symbolism and ritual were derived from it. Of course, this integration was favoured by the coexistence of the guilds of builders with the monastic and knightly orders, especially the Templars, throughout practically the whole of the Middle Ages. To question or disregard this Christian aspect of both ancient and modern Masonry is to deprive Masonry of an essential part of its own traditional identity, as well as demonstrating a complete ignorance of Christian esotericism, which is precisely what the Masonic Order has to a large extent taken up. Just one fact, and it is highly significant: the patron saints and protectors of Freemasonry are the two St. Johns, the Baptist and the Evangelist, and as has already been said, the Lodge is called the "Lodge of St. John".

To the Hermetic, Pythagorean and Christian presence should be added that of the Jewish tradition, which, like Christianity and Islam, has its roots in Abraham. The Hebrew tradition has transmitted to Freemasonry mainly the mysteries relating to the "words of passage" and the "sacred words", all of which come from the Old Testament, although it is true that one also finds sacred words and names of Christian origin, specifically what are called the Masonic "high degrees". In a sense, Freemasonry is the confluence of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, which makes up Judeo-Christianity, which was constituted as a single tradition during the most flourishing periods of the Middle Ages. It is no exaggeration to say that this constitution was made possible by operative Freemasonry itself, which in this respect played a truly "bridging" role, especially in the field of building and architecture.

As we shall have occasion to point out later, the words of passage and the sacred words are related to the search for the "lost Word", a search which is the focus of much of the Mason's symbolic research work. Likewise, the symbolic conception of the Lodge - like the Christian temple - is based on the geometric design of the temple of Jerusalem (or Solomon's), and the architect who directed the work on that temple, Master Hiram, is considered to be one of the mythical and legendary founders of Freemasonry.⁴

After this general outline in which we have, in our opinion, very briefly outlined the most significant traditional influences present Freemasonry, we shall now see, on the level of history, how these influences penetrated and became a constituent part of this tradition. Although we are not dealing here specifically with the history of Freemasonry, we believe that recalling certain historical facts could perhaps give us a deeper understanding of certain Masonic symbols which were indeed forged in the light of these multiple inheritances. History is also a sacred symbolism linked to the cyclical evolution and destiny of men and civilisations.

A symbolic history

We must therefore place ourselves in that crucial period in the history of Europe and the West, which was undoubtedly the Middle Ages. There we find the guilds, or groups of builders known as free-masons, who, being exempt from the franchise tax, were able to travel and move freely throughout the countries of Christendom. This freedom of movement gave them, in part, the name "franc-masons", which means "free masons, or builders". We say "in part" because, as Christian Jacq so aptly writes: "The Freemason is the sculptor of freestone, that is, of stone that can be carved and sculpted.... The 'Frankish mason' is above all the most skilful and competent craftsman, the man who is free in spirit and who frees himself from matter through his art.... In many medieval texts, the Freemason is opposed to the simple mason, who did not know the practical and esoteric use of the compass, the square and the ruler". Thus, these "Frankish Masons" possessed their initiatory mysteries, and their craft techniques, related to construction, expressed in the concrete order of things the effective realisation of these mysteries.

To a large extent, these techniques had been inherited by the operative Freemasons directly from the Roman *Collegia Fabrorum*, i.e. the groupings of builders and craftsmen whose origins went back to the legendary King Numa.

As with Freemasonry, the Collegia Fabrorum also took up the symbolic heritage of vanished traditions, the most notable of which was the Etruscan tradition, whose cosmology passed into the Roman Empire through the medium of these colleges. It is interesting to note that the Collegia Fabrorum particularly venerated the god Janus Bifronte, so called because he possessed two faces, one looking to the left (to the West, the side of darkness), and the other to the right (to the East, the side of light), thus encompassing the whole world. Although the symbolism pertaining to this Roman divinity is quite complex, it is nevertheless known for certain that it was connected with the initiatory mysteries, specifically with the rites of "passage" or "transit". In medieval operative Freemasonry, these same attributes became part of the two Saint Johns, whose name is identical to that of Janus. Moreover, through the Roman Collegia, Freemasonry received (among other sources of diverse provenance) the cosmology of the Pythagoreans, based, as already mentioned, on the symbolic correspondences of numbers and geometry, sacred sciences and arts which have precisely in architecture their most perfect applications. Among the well-known figures who facilitated the transmission of Pythagorean (and also Platonic) cosmology to the Middle Ages, it is worth mentioning, in the 7th century, Boethius, called the "last of the Romans" and author of the Consolation of Philosophy. Boethius' studies on astronomy, geometry, arithmetic and music were really decisive for the enrichment of the "seven liberal arts", divided into the trivium and the quadrivium, of utmost importance in the teachings of operative Freemasonry. On the other hand, the philosophy of Boethius had a significant influence on the literature and esoteric thought of traditional Freemasonry in the 18th and 19th centuries, for example in authors such as Louis Claude de Saint Martin and Joseph de Maistre.

In this vein, there was a legend among English-speaking Freemasons that a certain Peter Grower, originally from Greece, brought to the Anglo-Saxon countries certain knowledge concerning the art of building. Some authors, including René Guénon, claim that this personage, Peter Grower, was none other than Pythagoras himself, or rather, the science of numbers and geometry which, through the Pythagoreans, was introduced to the British Isles at the same time as it was introduced to the whole continent. In the world of Tradition, the names of persons, whether historical or legendary, often designate, more than the personages themselves, the knowledge they conveyed and which was often transmitted through the schools or confraternities they founded. This is also true to a certain extent of the Greek mathematician Euclid, who is mentioned in the Old Charges, which represent a series of documents and writings of operative Freemasonry in which certain events related to the sacred history of the Masonic Order are recorded. In one of these documents, the Regius manuscript, Euclid is referred to as the "father" of geometry, emphasising that this does not designate Masonry itself. In other manuscripts it is said that Euclid himself was a disciple of Abraham, which from the point of view of historical chronology is a real nonsense, since it is known that Euclid lived in Egypt during the third century B.C., and Abraham about two thousand years earlier. But, bearing in mind that this is sacred history, and not merely profane, what is really meant by this legend is that Euclid was the disciple who received the knowledge that the Patriarch embodied, which was none other than the Hebrew monotheism in its cosmogonic and metaphysical expression.⁵

In short, in reality this alludes to a transmission of a sacred character from the Jewish tradition to the Masonic Order, which amounts to a true "spiritual fatherhood".

Be that as it may, the legacy of Greco-Roman cosmology combined with Christian spirituality resulted in the creation of the Gothic cathedral, built by the guilds of builders. A cathedral, or a monastery, is a compendium of wisdom; in it, engraved in stone, all the sciences and all the arts, as well as the different biblical episodes that make up the history of the Judeo-Christian tradition, are set in stone. The various kingdoms of nature, mineral, vegetable, animal and human, as well as the angelic hierarchies that surround the throne where the deity dwells, are depicted. All this turns the cathedral into a book of images and hermetic symbols revealing the subtle and spiritual structure of the cosmos. Those columns that rise vertically towards another space, joining the lower part (the earth) to the upper part (the sky), those arches and vaults that resemble crystallisations of the circular movements generated by the stars, that sunlight that, penetrating through the polychrome colours of the stained glass windows, is transformed into a subtle fire that floods everything; all of this, we say, allows us to recognise the existence of a sacred and significant space and time.

This set of balances, modules and harmonious forms (which, by reflecting the Beauty of the divine intelligence, constitutes a "radiance of the true", as Plato would say) is generated from a central point, which in turn is the "trace" of an invisible vertical axis, but whose presence is omnipresent throughout the temple. This central point is none other than the "vital knot" that binds the entire building together, and where the whole structure of the building converges and expands, as if it were a breath. This "vital knot" was well known to the master builders, who saw its reflection in the navel, the symbolic seat of the "vital centre" of the temple-human body. This structure of the cosmos-cathedral, imperceptible to the ordinary senses, is nevertheless perceived through intellectual intuition and the visible forms of heaven and earth, which are symbolised by the vault and the quadrangular or rectangular base, respectively. Hence, Freemasonry conceives of the cosmos as a work of architecture, and the divinity as the Great Architect of the Universe, also called the Spirit of Universal Construction in other traditions.

The plumb line, image of balance and verticality

Near the cathedrals under construction were the workshops or lodges, where the plans were drawn up and designed, the offices were distributed, the details of the work were discussed, and the rites and ceremonies of initiation were held. These workshops were authentic centres of traditional education where, in addition to the techniques of the craft, cosmogonic knowledge was taught. In fact, the Masonic workshops art and science, practice and theory, in keeping with the famous scholastic adage that "science without art is nothing".

Each lodge or workshop was under the authority of a master architect, who had under him fellow officers (divided into subgrades and functions), who in turn supervised and directed the work of the apprentices. This ternary and hierarchical structure of apprentice, companion and master is found under the same or different names unanimously distributed in all initiatory and esoteric organisations, for such a hierarchy expresses a model of the entire initiatory process, which exactly reproduces the cosmogonic development from "darkness to light", from "chaos to order".

One of the few surviving testimonies of the designs made by operative masons is the album of the French architect Villard de Honnecourt, to which also belongs the layout of a labyrinth, which in its form is identical to that of all initiatory labyrinths: a series of concentric folds leading, after a long route starting at the periphery, to the very centre of the labyrinth, or the point of contact with the axis.

The vertical axis through which communication with the higher states takes place and the definitive "exit" from the cosmos, i.e. from the limits determined by time - and its cyclical becoming - and space.

Alongside the operative masons we find the wise alchemists and astrologers, perfect connoisseurs of the sciences of nature applied as living symbols of the initiatory and regenerative process. They endowed the cathedral with numerous symbols based on the correspondences and analogies between macrocosm and microcosm, heaven and earth, divinity and man, considering themselves the legitimate heirs of the sacred science of Hermes Trismegistus. The "rough stone" that the Masons polished and carved for building purposes represented, as we have already said, the same as the "chaotic matter" of the alchemists: an image of the undifferentiated plastic substance in which are contained, in an undeveloped and potential state, all the possibilities of manifestation of a world or a being. The stone was alive, not merely inert matter, and at the same time its hardness and stability symbolised the immutability and firmness of the Spirit. In all this, one fact should not go unnoticed; the alchemists had as their patron saint St. James the Greater, who together with St. John the Evangelist (patron saint of the Masons) and St. Peter (founder of the Church), attended the mysteries of the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor. From then on, a "bond" based on a "Secret" was to unite, over and above formal differences, all those who were under the protection of these Christian saints, an example of which were the fraternal relationships that were experienced during the construction of the cathedral-churches. This fraternity between alchemists and Freemasons was to last well into the 18th century.

The freedom of movement enjoyed by the Frankish Freemasons facilitated exchanges of knowledge with other craft guilds, including the so-called Companionship, which grouped together various trades (including stone carvers and sculptors), and which, like the Freemasons, had their degrees and secrets of initiation. These exchanges also took place with the various monastic and chivalric orders. It is therefore not necessary to stretch the imagination too far to get an idea of the spiritual climate that prevailed in that fertile and luminous period. Here we would have to say, without fear of exaggeration, that knowledge knew no frontiers. What is more, the cordial coexistence between initiatory and esoteric organisations and those of a religious and exoteric nature testified to the vigour and health of the tradition.

The Knights Templar, those warrior monks who were also builders and whose rules were inspired by Saint Bernard, maintained under their protection numerous Masonic lodges. And this should not go unnoticed, for when this organisation of Christian esotericism disappeared as such in bloody circumstances (due to the conspiracy of the sinister French king Philip the Fair and Pope Clement V), these same lodges, especially those in England and Scotland, welcomed many of the surviving Templars, who brought with them certain initiatory knowledge of their Order that would eventually become definitively integrated into the symbolic and ritual structure of Freemasonry. Of these lodges, the Royal Grand Lodge of Edinburgh, founded by King Robert Bruce, which opposed the abolition by fighting alongside the Templars, deserves to be singled out. It is significant, to say the least, that the Royal Order of Scotland was founded in 1314 (the year in which the Templars were abolished), and that it had as its Mother Lodge the Heredom Order of Kilwinning, some of whose rituals were Templar-inspired. And this word, heredom, means "inheritance", which is none other than that received by the Templars. Of course, there are no written documents attesting to the reality of this symbolic inheritance, although it is clear that there was one. For

In the case of sacred transfers, these take place primarily on a strictly spiritual and metaphysical level, and are realised in the human sphere through the mediation of individuals (whether known or anonymous) who actually carry them out.

A subtle and luminous thread links the higher world to the lower, and the lower to the higher, and the maintenance of that communication is one of the main functions that traditional and initiatory organisations have always had. Let us remember, in this regard, that the word "tradition" comes from the Latin *tradere*, which means "to transmit" - and by extension inherit - and the transmission of a truth, we repeat, which goes back to the very origins of humanity, and which all civilisations have considered to be the source of their knowledge and culture. Essentially, the Templars transmitted to Freemasonry the idea of the building of the spiritual temple "which is not made with hands" according to the Gospel message. This idea was embodied in the creation of certain high degrees, complementary to the Master's degree, of Templar origin. One of the most notable, because of its symbolic richness, is the Royal Arch degree of the English Rite of Emulation.

The Order of the Temple, at its innermost core, was Johannine in essence (as was Freemasonry), for it was inspired by the mysteries contained in the Gospel and the Apocalypse of St. John. The "Knights of Christ" also had as one of their main missions the protection of the Holy Sepulchre and the maintenance of relations with the "Holy Land", i.e. with the "Supreme Centre" or "Centre of the World". With the disappearance of the Temple, traditional Freemasonry (and here we emphasise "traditional"), like the Hermetic Order of the Rose-Cross, would continue to maintain for the West the links with this "Holy Land", also called in other cultures "Land of the Immortals" or "Land of the Blessed".

During the Renaissance, the same absence of written documents can be found in the relationship between Christian and alchemical hermeticism and Freemasonry. Thanks to the revival of Platonic philosophy promoted in Italy by Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, this period witnessed a new resurgence of Hermetic tradition and knowledge, which included Natural Magic and Christian Kabbalah.

Books such as Francesco Giorgi's *De Harmonia Mundi*, J. Reuchlin's *La Cabala Denudata*, John Dee's *The Hieroglyphic Monad*, and Cornelius Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy*, among many others, exerted a great influence on Hermetic circles throughout Europe. In all this there is something important to note: because of the fellowship that existed in the Middle Ages between the Hermetic groupings and the builders' guilds, it was perfectly normal that in an age such as the Renaissance - where the support of a traditional civilisation was already quite weakened - such links should be strengthened in order to safeguard the values of tradition and doctrine.

NOTES

1

Alluding to this primordiality, some Masonic texts from the Middle Ages trace Freemasonry back to the very origins of the present humanity, when it is said that: "Adam was the first Masonic initiate and Paradise the first Grand Lodge". To paraphrase what is mentioned in some English rituals, Masonic symbolism exists from immemorial time, i.e. from time immemorial.

2

Denys Roman, René Guénon et les destinies de la Franc-Maçonnerie.

3

Visita Interiora Terrae, Rectifying Invenies Occultum Lapidem ("Visit the interior of the Earth, rectifying you will discover the hidden Stone").

4

It is interesting to note that the roots of the names Hiram and Hermes, HRM, are identical, which leads us to suppose that the same traditional function exists between the two, or the same spiritual energy adapted to two traditional forms linked to the revelation of the cosmogonic mysteries.

5

Hebraic monotheism is constituted from the confluence between the Abrahamic tradition arising from Chaldea (Abraham was a native of Chaldean Ur) and a current directly linked to the Primordial Tradition. In the , this conjunction is symbolised by the meeting between Abraham and Melchizedek, "priest of the Most High and king of Salem", representative of this primordial current.

THE SYMBOLISM OF FREEMASONRY

FRANCISCO ARIZA

Part 2

Thus we come to the first half of the 17th century, where we witness the emergence of the Hermetic-Christian movement that has come to be known as "Rosicrucian Enlightenment". This movement, which attached particular importance to the invocation of the Hebrew and Christian divine names, as well as to the analogies and correspondences between the three worlds or planes of universal manifestation, bodily, soul and spirit, was to be decisive in the gestation of speculative Freemasonry. The Rosicrucians, who included genuine men of knowledge of the stature of Robert Fludd, Michel Maier and Jean Valentin Andreae (author of *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*), were, so to speak, the outer and visible arm of the enigmatic "Order of the Rose-Cross", from which they took their name. This hermetic society was composed of twelve members (a primordial number) who always remained completely anonymous, justified by the increasingly adverse conditions caused by the authoritarian power exercised by the majority of the nobility and inquisitorial dogmatism. This "Invisible College of the Rosicrucian Cross", as it was also called, inherited, thanks to the organisations

philo-templars like the Fede Santa to which Dante belonged, the essence of the symbolism of the Temple.

During the early years of the 17th century, the Rosicrucian movement spread Hermetic ideas throughout various central European states and principalities, especially in Bohemia and the Upper and Lower Palatinate, fostering a flourishing but brief period in which attempts were made to perpetuate the traditional culture of the West. However, all was cut short when the Rosicrucian movement was bloodily dissolved - as was the case with the Templars - during the "Thirty Years' War", an event which meant that the "Order of the Rose-Cross", the inspiration for this movement, disappeared from Europe and sought refuge in Asia.¹

Two things should be noted here; first, the bloody aspect that the persecution of the Templars and the Rosicrucians took on, an aspect that has been a fairly frequent feature in the West for a long time, which is to be understood, above all, as the expression of a truly sacrificial gesture closely linked to the solar myths, and which Christ himself exemplified with his passion and death on the cross. Likewise, every sacrificial action entails a ritual death followed by a rebirth or resurrection (the sun repeats this act every day when it disappears in the West and reappears in the East), which must be visualised at various levels of interpretation, including the collective destiny of an entire people and that of initiatory and traditional organisations. Second: the disappearance of the Rosa-Cruces occurred exactly 333 years after the destruction of the Order of the Temple (1314-1647).

This figure, 333, is a cyclical number, since the sum of its digits gives nine, which is the numerical symbol of the circumference, which in turn symbolises a complete and closed cycle. Let us say, in this sense, that a correct knowledge of the theory of cycles is essential to understand the historical development of the life of peoples and civilisations, situating this development in its correct analogical relations with the great cosmic cycles, relations which represent the symbolic expression of these cycles on the horizontal plane of the world. Thus, the "Thirty Years' War" marks the end of one cycle and the beginning of another: the one that would lead to the era of subversion of traditional and sacred values that constitutes the modern world. Indeed, with the disappearance of the Rosicrucians, the link between the West and the "Supreme Centre", i.e. the Primordial Tradition of the origins, would be severed.

This being so, however, things can also be considered in another way, and according to what a Masonic author says in this sense "... Asia designates nothing but the East, where the Mason's Lodge has always been situated".² Of course, if it is true that the "Invisible College of the Rosicrucian" was hidden in the physical East, this in no way invalidates the fact that it was also hidden in the symbolic and spiritual East. Again we repeat that historical events, like all things, are always symbolic, manifesting spiritual realities on the sensible level. The metaphysical order and the natural order do not deny each other but complement each other, thus contributing to the realisation of universal harmony, always bearing in mind, however, a hierarchical pre-eminence of the former over the latter, and not confusing the two.

At the end of and during Thirty Years' War, many Rosicrucians left the continent and settled in England and Scotland, following the path taken three centuries earlier by the Templars, seeking, like them, refuge in the lodges of the "Franco-Masonic Brothers". It goes without saying that

These relationships had their consequences in Masonic symbolism and rituals, especially in certain symbols and rites where the Hermetic and Rosicrucian inspiration is clearly visible. By that time (17th century) the operative character of Freemasonry had practically disappeared, and with it the loss of the ritualistic techniques of the builder's craft and the symbolic knowledge associated with them, which remained in the possession of small Masonic groups who, in view of the adverse conditions that were arising, opted to become anonymous. However, we believe that this loss was partly compensated for by the revitalising influence that Freemasonry was receiving from the various Hermetic societies and from some of the initiatory orders of chivalry that had survived, or had been created, since the end of the Middle Ages. The architectural symbolism linked to the mysteries of cosmogony would continue to be valid, as it is the hallmark of the Masonic tradition; but from then on this symbolism would only be applied in the construction of the inner temple. In other words, the "form" had almost disappeared, but not the spirit, the nucleus, the essence.

It is true, on the other hand, that the indiscriminate admission of people who did not have, nor were interested in, the slightest knowledge of what symbolism and initiation really were, created in parallel the conditions that led to the gestation of a Freemasonry deprived of its spiritual dimension, which is certainly the one known to the great majority of our contemporaries. However, during the 18th and early 19th centuries, all those traditional influences that were received over the years were really decisive for the definitive structuring of the most important "systems" or Rites of speculative Freemasonry, among which the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the Rectified Scottish Rite and the Rite of Emulation stand out for their traditional character.

This brief journey through time has allowed us to see how Freemasonry has intervened in the most significant events in the history of the West, helping to weave (often in a passive and receptive way, it is true, but it had to be so for reasons that escape us) the subtle fabric of history over the last seven hundred years.

Symbolic synthesis of the Order.

Symbols and Rites

As a sacred tradition, the symbolic richness of Freemasonry promotes in man the search for self-knowledge, while offering him the means and methods to access it, which are fundamentally expressed as a didactic that facilitates the awakening of consciousness, to which it restores the memory of its universal dimension. This teaching is classified as follows: a) visual and graphic symbols; b) sound and vocal symbols; and c) gestural symbols or rites.

Among the first are those of geometric design, whose diversification is quite extensive, and in fact Freemasonry is often identified with geometry itself, a word derived from Gea (earth) and metron (measure), i.e. "measure of the earth", which is of course related to the building trade (and surveyor) insofar as he delimits a space in order to carry out an architectural work. Among the graphic and visual symbols, we would like to highlight the so-called "picture of the Lodge", which is in itself a symbolic synthesis of the Lodge, and which in some way summarises the initiatory teaching contained in each of the first three Masonic degrees. Like any symbol that alludes to the ideas of "framing" or "framing", the Lodge picture protects a series of elements of a sacred nature destined for meditation and contemplation. At

This is similar to the mandalas or yantras of the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, symbolic models that design a geometrical image of the universe. They are, therefore, real meditation aids suitable for generating in man a vision and knowledge of his own inner structure, reflected in the structure of the world. We have said that each of the Lodge pictures summarises or synthesises the teaching of the degree to which it belongs, and this is true to the extent that it contains the most significant and important visual and graphic symbols. These are the tools themselves, such as the mallet and chisel, the level and plumb, the twenty-four-division ruler, the compass and the square. We also find the symbol of the Delta, the pentagrammatic star, the sun and the moon, the rough stone, the cubic stone and the cubic stone, the mosaic pavement, the frontispiece of the temple with the two columns Jakin and Boaz standing out on either side of the entrance door to the lodge, and so on. Some of these symbols will be discussed below.

Among the second group of symbols, the sonorous and vocal ones, we find the "sacred words" and the "words of passage" (all of Hebrew and Christian origin) and the legends of the various initiatory degrees. The sacred words relate directly to what in Freemasonry is called the "search for the lost Word", which constitutes the true Name of the ineffable God, and whose reconstitution is equivalent to "reuniting the dispersed", i.e. harmonising the various elements of being in the unity of their divine or supra-individual principle. All the "sacred words", which are given from the first to the last degree, could be visualised as an ordered and hierarchical scale leading to the "Word of Life", which is none other than the luminous and regenerative inner word propitiating spiritual birth. In this sense, the vocalisation of sacred words in Freemasonry is reminiscent, in certain respects, of the mantra pronunciation techniques in use in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. As has been repeated on several occasions, mantras are syllables and words of power, generating subtle vibrations that confer initiatory enlightenment by conveying the potency of the divine word immanent in the very reality of cosmic and human life. The "words of passage" are closely linked to the "sacred words". As their very definition indicates, the words of passage allude to the symbolism of passage or transit, i.e. they contain a key (or key) that opens the door to a sacred and qualitative inner space and time. It must be said that each of the words and letters of the sacred languages has its own numerical value, and all together, words and numbers, make up the "science of names", in itself a symbolic code that expresses the different readings of reality on the different levels and planes on which it manifests itself. As for the legends of the degrees, they are to be seen as a kind of sacred history of Freemasonry that permanently restores the memory and recollection of the mythical time of the origins. They are exemplary stories, models for the initiate to follow and which he identifies with the deeds and experiences of his ancestors, bringing them back to life in the present time, which thus acquires its true quality.

And the third group of symbols alludes, as has been said, to rites. And this word, "rite", is phonetically and etymologically identical to the Sanskrit rita, which means order. The rite would therefore be the repetition of a gesture or ordered act. In reality the initiatory (also religious) rite is the symbol itself in action executed according to an idea or archetype, and in turn the symbol is the fixation of a primordial rite, such as the "gesture" of the Great Architect creating the world. If the work with graphic and geometric symbols is fundamentally based on concentration and intellectual studies, the rites are a series of gestures and bodily postures that "fix" on the psychosomatic plane of the being the energy-force that the geometric symbol conveys. These Masonic ritual gestures are similar to Hindu and Buddhist mudras, which through certain postures and manual gestures describe a sacred language.

articulated by a rhythmic cadence which is itself a "visual music". This same symbol-rite relationship can also be extended to sound and vocal symbols; all of this expresses a unity of thought and action that must be incarnated in daily, everyday reality, for obviously there would be no point in meditating on the salutary energy of symbols if it is not put into practice in an orderly and conscious manner. Likewise, the rite is fulfilled and developed both in time and space; in time because the Masonic works are carried out from noon sharp (solar zenith) to midnight sharp (polar zenith); and in space because these works are carried out following the direction of the four cardinal points, i.e. from East to West and from Middy to North. In all this we recognise a circular and cruciform structure that encompasses the order of the macrocosm and the microcosm, both of which are linked by the recreation of a common gesture or rite.

Now, these three categories of Masonic symbols (which are to be found in all traditions) are ordered by the qualitative law of number, for whether one designs a geometrical figure, vocalises a divine name, or performs a ritual gesture, one is merely manifesting an inner rhythm which, when it is externalised and embodied in the concrete reality of things, necessarily takes on a numerical structure. In this respect, Joseph de Maistre says in his book *The Evenings of St. Petersburg*: "The Creator has given us number, and it is through number that he manifests himself to us, just as it is through number that man reveals himself to his fellow man; take away number and you take away the arts, the sciences, the word, and therefore intelligence. Turn him back, and his two heavenly daughters, harmony and beauty, will reappear with him: the cry will become song; the noise, music; the leap, dance; the force will be called dynamic, and the features, figures".

The Lodge, image of the world

First of all, let us turn our attention to the etymological meaning of the word *Logia*: it derives from *Logos*, which is the Word or Word, which, when it is emitted into the world, rescues it from darkness and chaos, thus creating the possibility of manifestation and universal order. Similarly, "*Logia*", if not etymologically then in its symbolic sense, is identical with the Sanskrit word *loka*, which means "world", "place", and by extension "cosmos". On the other hand, there is also an identity between *Logia*, *Logos* and the Greek *lyke*, meaning "light".

Here we have, in a nutshell, what distinguishes the Masonic Lodge above all: an illuminated space, but illuminated inwardly thanks to the spiritual influence transmitted by initiation. Hence the Lodge is likened to the "initiatory cavern", a term used in various traditions to designate the most central and hidden part of the cosmos, its very heart. Like the initiatory cavern, or the Hermetic *athanor*, the Lodge remains protected and shielded from the profane world and the "outer darkness", which will never penetrate it because it is actually situated on another plane. Let us explain, it is not a "place" in the literal sense, but rather the inner consciousness where the mystery of the human soul dwells. There is of course a concrete, physical Lodge, which can be situated on any street in any city of any nation, and which can change location as often as one wishes. What is important is that the outer temple symbolises with mnemonic and evocative imagery our own inner space and time. Beyond

The aim is to penetrate into what they veil and conceal, for is really a question of knowing the "Temple which is not made by human hands", as we said earlier.

The shape of the Loggia is that of a long square or rectangle, whose length is twice its width. In three dimensions, it would be a parallelepiped, a geometrical figure which Plato believed gave the harmonious proportions and relationships of the universe. Indeed, in the Masonic Lodge there is a multitude of symbolic correspondences that weave a perfectly woven whole where it is possible to perceive the harmony of the world. Nothing in this temple is superfluous or haphazardly placed, and every symbol present, every word or gesture uttered, is reflecting a particular shade of that harmony. It should be noted that the design of the Masonic Lodge is based on the guiding idea of the "golden number" or "divine proportion", a rule that was used by medieval architects.

This number determines, from a central point which expands in a logarithmic movement, the harmonic proportions present in all living organisms, whether it be, for example, the bodily structure of man, a flower, a snail, a starfish or galactic spirals. For the Pythagoreans, the "golden number" manifests the creative intelligence of the Monad or Unity, the Hieros Logos, or Great Architect, in his action, or gesture, upon chaotic matter, embodying in it the ideas of symmetry and order, balance and beauty.

For all these reasons, the Masonic Lodge synthesises the totality of universal life, of the manifested cosmos, to the point of being like the qualitative transfiguration of it. It is thus an image of the world, an Imago Mundi, a prototype of it, reduced to its essential form. In this sense, phrase inscribed on the temple of Ramses II could be applied to the Masonic Lodge: "This temple is like heaven in each of its dimensions and proportions". On the other hand, the elongated structure of the Lodge makes it possible to follow the diurnal course of the sun, the star that illuminates the earth from the East to the West, passing through the Midday or South. For all these reasons, and being like a symbolic image of the universe, the Lodge is ordered by the directions of space, which, arising simultaneously from the irradiation of a central point (the "Heart of the World"), generates a system of coordinates where the height, depth, length and width make up the three-dimensional cross, another symbolic scheme of the cosmos.

From all this derives a spiritual geometry well known to operative masons, applying it to the orientation and arrangement of sacred buildings, which were thus penetrated by the effluvia and magical forces of nature and the cosmos. From the intimate and hidden space of the grotto or cavern where our prehistoric ancestors officiated their sacred rites and worship, through the ritual hut or tent of nomadic peoples and temples built of wood, to monasteries and cathedrals, a long traditional chain has borne witness to man's desire to frame and delimit certain spaces by "charging" them with spiritual meaning, so that they would reflect on earth the very order of heaven.

Stained-glass window of Chartres Cathedral, 13th c.

Continuing with the description of the Lodge, we note that in the East the Debir is added, which in the Temple of Jesuralem or Solomon's Temple symbolised the Sancta-sanctorum or "Holy of ". The Debir is in the form of a hemicycle, identical to the semi-circular apse of Christian churches and cathedrals, as is the mihrab in Muslim mosques. This hemicycle is the

projection on the horizontal terrestrial plane of the dome or vault of heaven. All the remaining space in the Lodge from the entrance door to where the Debir begins is called the Hikal, which was the Sanctum or "Holy of Holies" in the Temple of Jerusalem itself. The Hikal is separated from the Debir by three steps, which allude to the three initiatory degrees of apprentice, companion and master. Thus, these three steps refer to the idea of gradual and hierarchical elevation to other or higher planes or levels of reality. Indeed, in the "Holy of Holies" was deposited that which was most sacred to the people of Israel: the "Ark of the Covenant", a small receptacle, itself a model of the cosmos, which "contained" the effluvia and blessings emanating from the divinity. From the "Ark of the Covenant", as the symbolic centre of the world, the blessings spread out in all directions of space, communicating beyond the walls and walls of the temple, to the city and the entire universe.

In the place that approximately corresponds to the "Ark of the Covenant" is the Altar or Altar, the heart of the Lodge where the vertical axis that connects heaven and earth is located. It is also called the "Altar of Oaths", because it is on it that the commitments and "alliances" that the Mason makes with the initiatory organisation are made. Not surprisingly, above the Altar is the Bible, or Book of Sacred Law, opened by the verses of the Book Kings or Chronicles, in which the building and exact measurements of the Temple of Jerusalem are mentioned, although it is also opened by the prologue of the Gospel of John, which begins with the : "In the beginning was the Word...".

The Old and New Testament verses thus refer to the building of the material temple and the spiritual temple respectively; the former as a reflection or symbol of the latter, for it exists before the world itself, and therein eternally reside the wisdom and intelligence of the Supreme Maker. Above the Bible are placed the compass and the square, the two Masonic emblems par excellence. These are the tools or implements which symbolise heaven and earth. The compass is used to draw the circle or circumference, a geometric figure which in all traditions is considered to be an image of heaven and the celestial. The square is used to draw the square, or the cross (which is formed by the union of two squares joined by their respective vertices), inseparable from the idea of the quaternary; thus: the four elements, the four cardinal points, the four seasons, the four cyclical periods of humanity, the four phases of the moon, the four periods of human life, etc., in other words, everything related to the earth and the terrestrial. The compass as the "science of the sky" and the square as the "science of the earth" synthesise the mysteries of cosmogony, which are also the mysteries of man understood in his totality. In a hermetic engraving attributed to Basil Valentinus, the figure of the rebis or androgyne (union of contrary energies in a single nature or substance) appears with a compass in his right hand and a square in his left, symbolising the union of heaven and earth. This same iconographic representation appears in a Chinese engraving showing the androgynous figure of the emperor Fo-Hi and his sister Niu-Kua, which confirms the universality of these two symbols. The union between the higher and the lower, between heaven and earth, is represented in Freemasonry by the superimposition and interlacing of the compass and the square, the former with the vertex upwards and the latter downwards, resembling the "Star of David" or "Solomon's seal". This complementarity, which nevertheless maintains a hierarchical order, is indicated by the Hermetic formula that "... that which is above (the macrocosm) is like that which is below (the microcosm) and that which is below like that which is above". If the Bible, as a sacred book, contains the revelation of the Word, the compass and the square are the tools used to apply the spiritual content of this revelation to the order of architecture. Bible, compass and square are the "Three Great Lights" of Freemasonry, for in study, meditation and ritual use they illuminate the path that leads to Knowledge.

Still in the East, on the back wall we find the luminous Delta with the Tetragram or ineffable name of God in the centre. This Delta is a triangle with the vertex upwards, a figure which expresses the reality of the universal principles, as well as being the first archetypal structure which expresses itself on all planes of manifestation as a force that creates, another that conserves and a third that destroys, or rather, transforms. These three force-ideas arise from the primordial unity which is symbolised in the Delta by a single eye which sometimes replaces the Tetragram, but which refers to the same sense of the unchanging presence of the deity at the very heart of manifestation. Moreover, manifestation, from its subtlest to its densest and most material reality, is symbolised by the four letters that make up the Tetragram: IOD, HE, VAU, HE, each corresponding to the four levels or worlds that constitute universal existence, and which are the same as those found in the Kabalistic Tree of Life. In this divine name, then, is summed up the work of creation as a whole, and its knowledge is directly linked with the search for the "Lost Word".

But the temple, and in this case the Masonic Lodge, is not only a static structure - as is the universe - but also a dynamic one, which can be visualised as a wheel, an image of the "wheel of the cosmos" or Rota Mundi. This is expressly indicated by the twelve columns or pillars that frame the Lodge grounds, and which are equivalent to the twelve zodiacal signs. Five of these columns are situated to the North, five more to the South, and the remaining two (the Jakin and Boaz columns) to the West, just inside the entrance portico. The zodiac (which means precisely "wheel of life") is like the framework of the visible universe, and its cyclical movement, together with that of the planets and other constellations, influences the alternating change of the seasons and the maintenance and renewal of the life of the cosmos and of man. It follows that Freemasonry is not ignorant of the ancient science astrology, which, together with alchemy, also reveals the mysteries of heaven and earth.

The Jakin and Boaz columns are linked to the symbolism of the two solstices, and thus to the two ascending and descending phases of the annual cycle. They are thus assimilated to the two Saint Johns, the Baptist and the Evangelist, and consequently to the "gate of men" and the "gate of the gods" respectively. These are the zodiacal gates of Cancer and Capricorn, corresponding to the entrance of summer and winter, i.e. the descent and ascent of sunlight. The solstitial gates play a very important role in the initiatory process, which, it must not be forgotten, exactly reproduces the stages of cosmogonic development. For the Pythagoreans, through the Cancer gate the souls enter the "den of the nymphs", which is the same as the Platonic cavern, another image of the world. There they are regenerated by the knowledge of the "little mysteries". Through the door of the gods these souls leave the cosmos to participate in the "great mysteries". That is to say that the human soul "... enters the world through one door and leaves through another, and in the meantime - designated by space and time - has the opportunity to recognise itself and escape from this condition by identification with other states of the universal being, which it can experience by means of the individual consciousness - similar to the universal consciousness - and which constitute the possibility of particular - and also universal - regeneration, always, of course, taking generation and creation in space and time as its support".³ These two processes are identical to those realised by Christ, whose birth, passion, death and resurrection represent an archetype of initiation. This same process can also be seen in the mythology of many heroes and solar gods, such as Osiris, Quetzalcoatl, Mithras and the architect Hiram himself. In relation to the life of Christ, it is interesting to note the fact that, without

It is no coincidence that the initials of the columns Boaz and Jakin are also the initials of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, the two cities that preside over the birth and death of the Saviour, i.e. the complete cycle of his human existence.

One of the marks of the Platinian Typography

In the centre of the lodge is the "mosaic pavement", a tapestry of black and white squares exactly like the chessboard, whose origins are also symbolic like those of most games. The "mosaic pavement" is undoubtedly a symbol of the manifestation that is effectively determined by the struggle and delicate balance between the positive, masculine and centrifugal energies (yang, luminous) and the negative, feminine and centripetal energies (yin, dark), also expressed in the alternation of rhythms and vital and cosmic cycles. In this sense, it is around the mosaic pavement that the ritual circumambulations that Masons perform in Lodge take place, thus following an order marked by the four cardinal points, the directions of space.

And finally, it is worth mentioning that in the very middle of the mosaic pavement is the "picture of the Lodge", which in the past was drawn on the floor at the beginning of the work, and erased when the work was finished. We have already said that this picture is a synthetic outline of the entire Masonic temple, as well as being a symbolic support for meditation and concentration. Indeed, the picture of the Lodge, containing within it the design of the most significant and important symbols, thus becomes a vehicle of spiritual influence in Freemasonry. It is therefore no coincidence that it is precisely around this square (which is the most central geometric point of the Masonic temple) that the rite of the "chain of union" takes place, in which the creative and illuminating power of the Great Architect is invoked, and implicitly also that of all the mythical and historical ancestors who contributed to the building of the material and spiritual temple. And this vertical invocation is realised through the chained and fraternal union of all the living forces present in the Lodge, that is to say of all the "brethren", who thus establish a subtle communication between their respective individualities, serving as a support for the manifestation of the sacred influence.

And lastly, it should be mentioned that around the "mosaic pavement" and the "Loggia square" are the three pillars of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. These pillars are also called "three little lights", because above each of them burns a little candle; they are thus columns of light and fire, three names of the Architect directly related to the building of the temple and of the cosmos.

But we would not wish to end without offering a text from the Readings of the Rite of Emulation which beautifully sums up all that we have so far said about the Masonic Temple: "Let me draw your attention to the form of the Lodge, which is a parallelepiped extending from East to West, in breadth between the North and South, and in height from the surface of the earth to its centre, and even as high as the heavens. "A Lodge of Masons is thus described to show the universality of Science and to teach us that the charity of a Mason should know no bounds but those of prudence. "Our Lodges should be oriented from East to West, because all Temples dedicated to divine worship, like the Lodges of Masons, are or should be so oriented. "The Universe is the Temple of the God we serve. Wisdom, Strength and Beauty support His Throne as the pillars of His work, because His

Wisdom is infinite, His Power is omnipotent, and His Beauty shines in the order and symmetry of the whole of Creation. He stretched out the heavens to infinity, like a vast canopy; He arranged the earth like a dais, He crowned His temple with the stars like a diadem, and from His hand radiate power and glory. The sun and the moon are the messengers of his will, and all his law is concord [Love]".

NOTES

1

The word "sacrifice" comes from the Latin *sacrum facere*, a sacred act or deed.

2

Jean Tourniac, *Vie et perspectives de la Franc-maçonnerie Traditionnelle*.

3

Federico González, *The Wheel*, a symbolic image of the cosmos.

THE SYMBOL AND THE MASONIC RITE OF THE CHAIN OF UNION

FRANCISCO ARIZA

The chain of union is undoubtedly one of the most significant of all the symbols that decorate the Masonic Lodge. It is a cord that encircles the entire temple at the top. This "high" position gives it a celestial connotation, confirmed by the twelve knots that appear from stretch to stretch along the entire length of the string, symbolising the twelve signs of the zodiac. These knots also correspond to the twelve columns which, except on the eastern side, also surround the Lodge. Five of these columns are situated on the Septentrion side, the same number on the South side, and the remaining two - columns J and B - on the West side.

Symbolic chart of the Lodge. Apprentice Degree

To understand this symbolism, it should be borne in mind that the Lodge is first and foremost an image of the world, and as such there must be in it a representation of what constitutes the very "frame" of the cosmos, which is properly speaking the zodiac. Many sacred enclosures or sanctuaries - as well as cities built according to the rules of traditional architecture - being the projection on earth of the celestial order, are in one way or another "framed" by the zodiacal constellations. This is the case, for example, in the Chinese Ming-Tang, in the Temple of Jerusalem (and its archetype the Celestial Jerusalem), in many Templar fortresses, and in constructions as old as the megalithic Stonehenge. Likewise, the operative Masons, and in general the artisan builders of any traditional society, used a string to determine the correct position of the temples or cathedrals, which were always and invariably oriented according to the directions of space indicated by the four cardinal points, exactly like the Lodge. Now, as René Guénon mentions "... among the functions of a 'frame' perhaps the principal one is to keep in place the various elements which it contains or encloses within it so as to form with them an ordered whole,

which, as we know, is the very meaning of the word 'cosmos'. This 'frame' must therefore, in a certain sense, 'bind' or 'unite' these elements, which is formally expressed by the name of 'chain of union', and even from this results, as far as it is concerned, its deepest significance, for as all symbols which take the form of a chain, string or thread (all of them symbols of the axis) refer in the final analysis to the sūtrātmā.¹ From a metaphysical point of view, therefore, the Masonic chain of union would come to mean exactly the same as the "chain of worlds": a symbol summing up all the states, beings and worlds that make up the universal manifestation, which subsist and are linked together by the "thread of Atmā" (sūtrātmā), i.e. by its life-giving breath or spirit.

On the other hand, the chain of union is also the knotted rope (or houppe dentelée) that appears in Masonic "Lodge pictures", and specifically in those belonging to the Apprentice and Companion degrees. The symbolic significance of this rope is identical to that of the chain of union, but at the same time, and specifically linked to the symbolism of the Lodge picture, we should also consider another important aspect of it: that its function is to "protect", as well as to "unite" and "bind", the symbols and emblems that are drawn on the picture, which is considered to be a sacralised space, and therefore inviolable. In this sense, the idea of "protection" is included in the symbolism of the knots and ligatures, whose respective shapes recall the layout of the daedalus and initiatory labyrinths. In universal symbolism, the labyrinth, besides being related to "journeys" and initiatory trials, also has as its function the defence and protection of sacred places or spiritual centres, preventing access to them by profane people who are not qualified to receive initiation. But the defence extends equally (and we might say primarily) to preventing access to the subtle influences of the lower psyche, which by their particularly dissolving character represent a clear danger to be controlled and avoided at all costs, for by means of these influences certain evil and chaotic energies are introduced which are destined to destroy, or at best to weaken the spiritual centres themselves and the traditional organisations linked to them, and consequently to prevent as far as possible communication with the truly higher influences, of which these centres and organisations have been - and are - precisely the support. And following on from this last reflection, perhaps it would not be out of place to point out the dangers of dissolution (or petrification, for that matter) that currently beset Freemasonry, since it is clearly evident that this traditional organisation has been subjected to a gradual extirpation of the initiatory and esoteric dimension of its symbols and rites. And what is perhaps most regrettable is that this action has often been carried out by Masons who have not understood that it is precisely thanks to these symbols and rites (revealed at the beginning and handed down through the ages) that the Masonic Order acquires its full meaning, for they constitute its signs of identity, what the Order is in itself, and could not cease to be, unless it were to be totally distorted and emptied of its essential content. In order for this situation not to become irreversible, we believe that it is necessary for Masons of traditional spirit (i.e. those who consider that Freemasonry belongs to and is a branch of the Primordial Tradition and therefore a path to Knowledge) to restore the cosmogonic and metaphysical sense of its symbolic-ritual legacy, starting by considering that the chain of union is indeed the celestial "frame" that delimits, separates and protects the "world light" from the "world of darkness", the sacred from the profane.

Symbolic synthesis of the partner degree

In addition to the knotted rope which surrounds the Lodge and the square, there is a rite in Freemasonry which is also known as the chain of union. This constituted by the interlacing of the hands, with intertwined arms, of all the members of the workshop, which takes place precisely around the Lodge painting and the three pillars of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty just before the work is closed. Firstly, it should be said that the chain of union is one of the Masonic rites that most directly alludes to the Masonic fraternity, which, in fact, is based on the bonds of harmony and concord that unite all Masons. Hence why the knots of the rope are also called "bonds of love", for love, understood in the highest sense, is the force that reconciles opposites and resolves all oppositions in the unity of the Principle. This fraternity represents, therefore, the very foundation on which the initiatory and traditional organisation itself rests. In this sense, the interlacing of hands and arms configures a cruciform weave that evokes the image of a strongly cohesive and organised structure.

But this rite is fundamentally performed in order to address a prayer or invocation to the Great Architect, and it is in this invocation that its deepest meaning and *raison d'être* lies. Therefore, to dispense with the prayer, as is the case in many lodges today, by simply ignoring it or considering it an anachronistic anachronism, inevitably leads to the impoverishment of the rite itself, which is consequently reduced to almost nothing. In ancient operative Freemasonry, however, prayer and invocations of divine names formed a constituent part of the rite and of the symbolic workings; and it was performed in the chain of union and around the cadre of the Lodge, thus confirming the truly "central" role that the latter has always played in Freemasonry.

Generally, the chain of union begins and ends with the Worshipful Master, and it is he, as the highest authority in the Lodge, who leads the invocation to the Grand Architect. Here is an example of this as it is still in use among some Masonic Rites which have continued to retain part of the operative legacy:

"¡Supreme Architect of the Universe! Sole Source of all good and of all perfection! ¡O Thou! Who hast ever wrought for the happiness of man and of all Thy creatures; we thank Thee for Thy fatherly bounties, and we conjure Thee to bestow them upon each one of us, according to Thy considerations and according to our needs. Spread over us and over all our brethren Thy heavenly Light. Strengthen in our hearts the love of our duties, that we may observe them faithfully.

May our meetings be ever strengthened in their union by the desire for Thy pleasure and to make us useful to our fellow men. May they be forever the abode of peace and virtue, and may the chain of perfect and fraternal friendship be henceforth so solid between us that nothing can alter it. So be it.

Consequently, and as is evident from this Masonic prayer, the chained and fraternal union becomes the horizontal and psychosomatic (earthly) support, upon which will "descend" - stimulated by the prayer - the blessings of the spiritual or supra-individual influence - "Thy celestial Light" - thus enabling a path of axial communication between heaven and earth, or as it is said in Masonic language, between the Lodge on High and the Lodge below. In other words, what is essentially intended through the invocation is communication with the celestial energies (the Ideas or creative attributes of the universal Architect) whose spiritual action has shaped - and permanently shapes - the symbolic, ritual and mythical (i.e. cosmogonic and metaphysical) reality of the initiatory organisation. At the same time, the rite of the chain of union concentrates the collective entity constituted by all the ancestors who actually participated in the Tradition.

and its knowledge, and of those who are said to dwell in the "Eternal East" (the celestial Lodge). This entity becomes one in communion with its present-day heirs, that is, with those Masons who, having received and understood (to whatever extent) the message of its traditional legacy, contribute today to keeping it alive and active. In this sense, the chain of union is also symbolising the initiatory chain of the Masonic tradition (and by analogy that of all traditions), the origin of which is immemorial, as is the message it has passed down through time and history.

Individualities, or rather, the idea of the individual and the particular that each component of the chain may have of itself, disappears as such to form a single body that vibrates and breathes to the same rhythmic cadence. The chain of union thus becomes a magical and sacred circle where a cosmic and theurgic force concentrates and flows, which, assimilated by each and every one of its members, allows them to participate in the true Masonic spirit and its salutary and regenerative energy.

It is not surprising then that during the course of the initiation rite, the neophyte symbolically receives the "light" integrated into the chain of union, which is perfectly consistent in a tradition in which ritual and collective work play an eminent role as vehicles for the transmission of spiritual influence.

NOTE

1

See René Guénon, *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science* ch. LXV.

MASONRY AND THE ART OF EMBROIDERY

MARIA ANGELES DIAZ

Freemasonry is an initiatory path whose reality emanates from the Great Architect of the Universe, the principle to whose glory Masons perform all their work. And it is by relying on the symbolism of the builder's craft that the Mason accomplishes his inner work of self-knowledge. By taking himself as a small whole, he comes to discover within himself the laws that govern the cosmos.

As all traditional crafts are symbolic, they allow the opening up of inner spaces within oneself, which happens simultaneously with the development of the function of the craft itself, because their structure constitutes an ordered code that imitates the cosmic model, and it is this quality that gives these crafts their role as supports for the transmutation of consciousness.

Thus, at the origin of Freemasonry, the operative work of construction was perfectly linked to the Mason's own internal process, so that the rite and the symbol were fulfilled at the same time as the external building was being erected. The apprentice mason, under the guidance of his master builder, learned to discover the edges of the rough stone, of which he himself was the living symbol. With the help of the tools of the trade, that is to say, the scarp, or

chisel, and the mallet, roughed and polished the stone while at the same time polishing his own psychological imperfections and conditionings, which are the main impediment to the stone becoming cubical and square, and becoming the solid and stable part required for any well-built building. The development of the intellectual faculties of the operative Mason came about by applying the symbolic transposition of the transcendent idea to the actual construction of the building itself. For psychic regeneration, the ordering of the mind, is born of the understanding of the Higher Order to which the symbol constantly alludes, by means of the suggestion and evocation that come to the surface when meditating upon it. In this way the Mason discovers faculties in himself which were previously unsuspected, and which, but for his own psychological purification and application to the rite of memory, would never have had the opportunity to develop.

It should be noted that this trade of builder was carried out exclusively by men. This is because women had their own initiation rites, adapted to more particularly feminine trades, and through which they carried out their work of internal realisation. These trades are mostly related to weaving, as was the case with the "silk spinners". Unfortunately, no rituals referring to this type of female initiation seem to have survived to the present day, at least as far as the West is concerned, although it is known that these trades were linked to the Companionship, an initiatory craft organisation very close to Freemasonry. It is a fact that although weaving-related trades are more closely linked to women, some of them were carried out by both men and women. This was the case, for example, in the art of tapestry weaving during the western Middle Ages. Often these tapestries, which were of great and evocative beauty, as well as being painstakingly crafted, were made to adorn the cathedrals built by the masons and their companions. This suggests that there were workshops during the construction of these buildings dedicated exclusively to this work and therefore in close connection with the work of the builders and architects themselves. However, the upholsterers and tapestry makers were directed in their work by master weavers and embroiderers, who at the same time as teaching the technique of the trade, also transmitted its symbolic code. The fact that a woman, in this specific case, was also the one who directed the men, clearly indicates the pre-eminence of the feminine element in the art of weaving. Today, among the Guatemalan Indians, the art of weaving is still preserved as part of their cultural heritage, and their brocades¹ repeat the geometric, floral, animal or bird patterns that have always been the motifs of their ornaments. These brocades reflect the symbolism through which this people, descendants of the ancient Maya, express and transmit their message. It is precisely the brocades made by "women's hands" that are the most prestigious because of the beauty of their composition, thus confirming what we said earlier about the pre-eminence of women in an art that is proper to them. In any case, it should be pointed out that any craft carried out jointly by men and women is always something exceptional, since in a traditional society there has always been a clear distinction between male and female crafts, which are adapted to the particular conditions of the natures of men and women, which, although one in essence, is dual and manifests itself as dual, and in apparent opposition, on the level of the forms.

The rhythms of the seasons, the cycles and periods of the moon and the harvests... are so closely linked to the woman's own organism that she lives them spontaneously and naturally. This is a rite in which she participates by divine imperative, and to which it is not necessary to add herself because it is already in her. This reality points to the different way in which women reveal the secrets of things and reflect the order of the universe. From this particular vision of the world are born

their crafts, characterised by the use of sensitive materials in accordance with their receptive (yin) nature. This receptivity is symbolically correlated with that of the earth; the earth, in its active stillness, welcomes the seed in its entrails, which it fertilises through the capturing action of the energies of the sky, and from the union of which the fruit of the harvest is born. Naturally this heaven-earth relationship is maintained between man and woman. This is like saying that it is through the union of the complementaries that the synthetic vision of the Universal Order is arrived at, and that from this union, life in all its orders of reality emerges.

Now, leaving aside the religious paths, since Freemasonry is an initiatory path which in the West keeps its rites and symbolic code alive, it is to it that women today can be incorporated on the path of Knowledge, without the Masonic symbols that refer to the building trade being a conditioning factor for its realisation, but rather a new way of adapting to the reality of the times. But without leaving aside the study and research of the symbols and rites proper to women's trades, knowing beforehand that these are united in the unity of the same message. The interest in finding the analogy between the symbolism of the builder's trade and the symbolism of women's trades would therefore constitute the collective work of a women's lodge, thus rescuing a heritage that is in keeping with its nature. We say women's lodges, not mixed lodges, for the latter, as René Guénon warns, are a deviation from any authentic initiatory process.²

Since Freemasonry has a craft origin, its symbolism is in one way or another linked to any traditional craft, and particularly, as we have seen, to those related to weaving. This is also demonstrated by certain Masonic legends relating to the mythical origins of this initiatory Order, as we shall see below.

Cormerod Labyrinth

All this leads us to think that it is in the art of weaving, and more particularly in embroidery, that these symbolic correspondences between different crafts can best be made, based on the "gift of tongues" referred to in Tradition. For the word is illuminated when it expresses the harmony of the world, which is also its Truth. Embroidery is a representation of this, and its locution is expressed through the colour, the texture of the fabric and the shine of the silks, which are the elements with which embroidery configures its code and its traditional message.

II

It should be noted that in ancient Masonic manuscripts, Naomi³ is mentioned as the first weaver. Specifically, it is said that she invented the art of weaving, which until then was unknown. That is why, according to the manuscripts, this craft is called "woman's art". On the other hand, René Guénon refers to the art of embroidery as an example of an exclusively feminine craft, highlighting the fact that these crafts are perfectly capable of serving as a support for an initiation⁴. All this leads us to the conclusion that it is through embroidery, taken as a parcel in the order of feminine crafts, that the synthesis can be achieved that makes possible the symbolic transposition with the very symbolism of Freemasonry.

We can say that the Lodge is a protected and symbolically and ritually "framed" place, where the signs that make this sacred space recognisable are fixed. In the same way, a cloth arranged for its ornamentation is the initial and protective frame in which all the forms of the sacred space are displayed.

manifested in the creation of the embroidery. That is, a yin (receptive or feminine) space, ready to attract yang (active, masculine) energy.

This frame that circumscribes the fabric is already a space qualified by the measurement and the choice of the fabric texture, where the embroiderer traces the order that has been previously designed on the plane of ideas. This action carried out by the embroiderer is identical to that of the master architect, whose plans and geometric designs are the symbolic translation of the universal ideas and principles that will be embodied in the construction of the building. The canvas, which geometric symbolism corresponds to the horizontal, represents the plane where all the indefinite forms of creation are described and multiplied. The vertical would be given by the needle, symbol of the axis that connects the different planes of manifestation. From the action of the needle on the fabric (yang on yin, the vertical on the horizontal) emerges the relief of the embroidery, that is to say the final result of this union between the complementary.

In turn, this frame, which circumscribes the fabric prepared for embroidery, is perfectly analogous to the Masonic lodge chart, where the most significant signs of the degree to which this chart corresponds are traced. This square, measured squarely, that is to say with just proportion, symbolises the plane on which the creative intelligence will be made manifest. It represents a synthesis of the Lodge, which is also an image of the cosmos. The four sides of the rectangle of the square, or similarly of the fabric, are oriented according to the four directions of space: East-West and North-South. It is therefore an ordered and delimited space, and this order is furthermore consecrated by the rite of its layout and design, as performed by the ancient operative masons. Here we can see a correspondence between the outlining of the Lodge's frame, made with chalk on the pavement, and the actual application of the needle and thread on the fabric, also framed as we have said. In both cases the ritual gesture is the same. The mason and the embroiderer, fulfilling their craft, become co-participants in the "gesture" of the Great Architect. That is, the laws of the macrocosm adapted to the microcosm, which is but the same thing.

Saint Omer Labyrinth

In the same , the part of an embroidery in no way differs from the whole of the work, but each of its divisions contains it in its entirety. "The part contains the whole", Tradition tells us. Thus, on the way to the knowledge of oneself and of the world, it is also necessary to parcel out the terrain' or field' of consciousness, that is to say to "limit" and "measure" it, shaping in it a geometrical structure analogous to the structure of the cosmos, which is carried out through different stages to conclude in that which is beyond those same limits, that is the supra-cosmic and the metaphysical.

The fragmentation of the fabric to which the embroidery technique is subject in the frame defines the concrete situation on the plane or drawing, that is to say, and by analogy, one's own spatio-temporal reality, thus avoiding the dispersion of ideas. It is through the repeated action of the tools of the trade, the thread and the needle on the canvas, that the embroidery takes on relief. In other words, the reiteration of what is understood by the symbol, its ritualisation, leads the mind to the recognition of the Idea, which configures the symbol and the rite.

This initial recognition by the needle and thread within the framed fabric represents the journey through the labyrinth of the psyche, which the initiate tries to bring order to. This order, which is also harmony, begins to be defined as the embroiderer fills in the spaces in the fabric. This is what

It follows that only that which one can name (define) is ultimately what one understands, and that is because in the name of things is their very essence, what they really are. In this way the embroidery is beautiful because it recreates the Beauty, Order and Harmony that the embroiderer understood, which is why the work is symbolic, because it transmits this understanding.

We have already noted that the main tools of the embroiderer's trade are the needle and the thread. The former is handled by ascending from the canvas, along the invisible axis that connects the worlds, a connection that she confirms in her descent where, at a point in the relief, she establishes the union between the upper and lower planes, heaven and earth. That is, the Idea fixed on the concrete plane of forms.

This means that the understanding of the supra-individual has immediate repercussions on the individual. The needle, the axial symbol, whose function is also similar to that of the plumb line, locates the leading thread in the horizontal (equivalent to the level) configuring the cross. From above (from the plane of archetypal ideas), the higher energies descend, fertilising matter, converting into act what was in potency, which will only reflect an essentially immutable energy.

We are referring here to the symbolism of embroidery on a hoop, in which, as we have said, the needle ascends vertically and descends in the same way. This double route of the needle starts at the bottom and inside of the fabric, where it fixes the thread by means of a knot. This means that every initiatory process starts from the most hidden place of the being. From one's own heart. Otherwise the creative intellect could not be reborn in the light of its reality. The knot represents the connection with tradition and fearless faith, without which the path becomes a journey into another part of the perhaps much darker and gloomier darkness of the human being; it is the darkness of no return to which the mind dispossessed of the sacred meaning of existence leads. This first knot, with which all embroidery work begins, would be equivalent to the "foundation stone" in constructive symbolism. That is to say, the first stone with which the work begins.

The thread is thus held in place from the invisible, i.e. below the , to the visible, above it. As it descends, the needle passes through the fabric and is again hidden, but not the relief created. In truth, the tools or symbols of any initiatory path are only mediators, but never an end in themselves, and they cease to be necessary when the idea they represent is incarnated, giving birth to the true freedom of the being, consciously integrated into the fabric of the universe. This happens by ritualising all actions, i.e. by participating in the order of the world, analogous to that of the Great Work, which in the symbolism of embroidery is represented by the rhythm (rite) of the ascent and descent of the needle, recreating, by the cyclical succession of the stitches, the manifestation of the embroidery.

In the ornamentation, worked without a frame, the action of the tools of the trade allow the description of other geometric symbols, such as the circle⁵, the spiral⁶, the cross⁷, the triangle⁸, and as many others as the type of stitch with which the work is carried out suggests. This may be due to the ductility of the fabric not stretched by the hoop or frame of the stretcher. As we can see, each type of stitch or technique applied to this craft has a particular suggestion. The art of the embroiderer consists of becoming a thread, coating her soul with brightness and colour, and penetrating with the needle the weft and warp of the universal fabric, recognising her own assembly with the rest of creation. For all beings make up the rich and majestic embroidery of existence.

What we are saying needs no further exposition to prove that this craft is totally valid support for meditation. Or what is the same thing, an authentic symbolic way of access to Knowledge, since its structure is a perfect design of the reality of the Universal Order which it is representing by analogy.

We have said that the thread is the conductor of the work, that which binds it together and at the same time unites it. It means that for a true regeneration of the mind to take place, one must be firmly committed to the Tradition, applying one's intellectual capacity to deciphering the symbolic codes that represent it. Being firmly convinced that there is a revelatory message Truth, of life-giving, life-ordering Oneness. Once it is admitted that this message is contained in every symbol, one must immediately feel the compelling need to decipher it. This demands a permanent state of vigilance.

This first level of self-recognition corresponds to the first tracing of the thread on the fabric, since embroidery without a hoop is not worked in a single part, but is developed in different stages⁹, i.e., the drawing plane must be traced several times, as many times as there are colours and types of stitch in the work, thus passing from the multiplicity of all its forms to the unity of the embroidery as a whole. We say that this first tracing finds its symbolic correspondence with the Masonic initiation, during which the recipient enters the Lodge for the first time, and before receiving the requested Light, makes a first tour of the plan of the Temple, taking note of its proportions and measurements, which are analogous to those of the cosmos. Thus, in crossing the "narrow gate" that separates the profane world from the sacred, the recipient enters the order of his own universe, which he traverses as a neophyte, that is to say, as a new-born.

The second stage of the embroidery consists of filling in other spaces in the fabric, already qualified by the first run of the thread on it. The seed that has already been planted has sprouted and begins to grow. The journey towards the centre of oneself appears already defined in its individual and human state, and it is time to see results. These are not achieved unless there is an effective realisation, that is, by giving oneself openly and unreservedly to the work. The multi-coloured beauty with which the manifestation expresses itself, born of its invisible reality, shows its exuberance only when it is recreated. It is only the free choice one makes through one's intelligence that will allow the blindfold to fall from one's eyes and enjoy it.

Likewise, this second journey of the needle, reaffirmed in the thread, is closely related to the second masonic degree, that of companion. The companion, who has already been instructed in his apprenticeship, his rough stone discovered and roughed out, is now qualified to carry out his carving, for which he has the support of the tools of the trade, specially designed to make his work easier. This second level in embroidery is done under the protection of the first, that is to say that it is thanks to a first awareness, to a commitment acquired with oneself and with the Tradition, that is possible for the consciousness to ascend to other levels of understanding. Symbolically, this could be described by a spiral of centripetal motion that finds its centre in the very heart of the human being, where true intellectual intuition resides.

The tracing board, the fabric, which appeared "white" at the beginning, i.e. virgin, takes on the shapes that the craftswoman embroiders on it, shapes that have been made according to the plans of the Great Architect of the Universe. The embroiderer does nothing but imitate these plans, her work being a journey through the warp and weft of the universal fabric. Counting and measuring (numbering and geometrising) in a small space (that of embroidery, in this), the measures and proportions of the cosmos, the result will be a work made according to the Divine Plan, in which the embroiderer is also included.

The culmination of the work of craftsmanship takes place after the last movement of the needle and thread through the fabric. This phase corresponds to the filling in of the smallest spaces, those most internal to the "mandala" of embroidery and existence. These are the stitches that conclude the work, giving it its true unity through the complementarity of all its parts, which the thread, led by the needle, links and connects with its beginning; that is, the idea from which they emerged, the non-form. In other words, that all the parts of the individual being coexist and are resolved in the Universal Being, the Principle and End of all things.

It is thus, as in the making of embroidery itself, that every initiatory path consists of various stages of realisation, which mark gradual integration of all the states of being, linking them to their unity. This Unity is like the ornament of the embroidery to which nothing can be subtracted or added, and which makes no difference to any of its stitches, which cannot be dispensed with once the work is finished, made up of all the colours and shades, all the forms and their reliefs. Therefore, the finished embroidery is the ultimate expression of this art, as it is the recreation of the Great Work, that of the Supreme Maker, in which all beings are inserted as are the threads of the embroidery.

But the embroiderer's work does not end at the end of her work, just as creation is not finished, but continues to be made at every moment. The thread, the conductor of her journey through the different planes of existence, is the symbol of her own soul, which cannot be bound to any particular form or image. This means that the embroiderer must not identify herself with her work, as this would restrict her freedom and consequently her own realisation, for what makes the work "perfect" is that which is not included in it, nor is it part of any of the elements that make it up, but which nevertheless gives it all its reality. "The principle of a thing is neither one of its parts among the others nor the totality of its parts, but that in which all the parts are reduced to a unity without composition" ¹⁰. The beauty of embroidery is only an envelope of true Beauty, and this Beauty is not chained to relative existence, but is Existence itself, which transcends all duality, which is also all illusion and all form. The embroidery represents one of the veils of Maya, the Hindu goddess, the maker of forms, who is also the Art with which the Great Architect performs the work of creation. Behind these veils lies the mystery of life. Therefore, the true work of the embroiderer must have no other purpose than to draw back these veils, in the hope of finding Knowledge, and identifying with the reality that emanates from it.

1

Brocade is the technique of applying coloured threads during the actual weaving of the fabric, so that these threads form designs on the fabric.

2

Oswald Wirth on the subject of female initiation says: We need courageous women who are able to rescue the symbolism of the needle.

3

Naomi, sister of Tubalcain, both sons of Shelah and Lamech, of the offspring of Cain (Genesis IV). The image of Eve with a distaff, as seen in one of the capitals in the cloister of the monastery of San Juan de la Peña (Spain), is noteworthy in this respect.

4

Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie et le Compagnonnage (Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie et le Compagnonnage (volume II, chap. "Initiation féminine et initiations de métier").

5

In the so-called "chain stitch" "hemstitch" "hemstitch" "crepe" and others.

6

At the point of the "knots" where the thread coils around the needle like a serpent, which is also the image of the Tree of Life, the axis of the world with the serpent coiling around it. This geometry brings us back to the correspondence with the layout of the lodge square.

7

In the so-called "marking" or "cross" stitch.

8

At the point "Romania".

9

It should be made clear that when the embroidery is one-colour and worked in a single stitch, the fragmentations of the fabric, whether in or out of the hoop, are finished as far as their portion is concerned. This is not the case when the shade of the embroidery is varied. In this case, each colour involved in the design of the work is done separately.

10

Ananda Coomaraswamy, quoted by René Guénon in Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science, Chapter XLIII: "The Cornerstone".

THE STONE

FERNANDO TREJOS

For archaic thought, stones are living beings, laden with years and experience, capable of speaking to certain men of ancient secrets heard by them through the centuries and which they transmit only to those who open their innermost ears and allow the penetration of their subtle energies. In the enormous variety of their sizes, shapes, qualities, colours and degrees of purity, they are a solid expression of cosmogony and of the hierarchies of the universe, and can serve man as a support and symbolic vehicle of knowledge, and also - like all sacred symbols - as an awakener of consciousness and a computer of the mind.

Following the Hermetic maxim that "that which is below equals that which is above, and that which is above equals that which is below", we could affirm that just as the stars are the visible reflection of a higher intelligence, and the sensible manifestation of invisible energies found in metaphysical dimensions, so the mineral kingdom is the earthly expression of those celestial energies that in stony forms "ripen in the bowels of the earth". From the most common stones, which represent the ordinary stars, to the semi-precious and precious ones, related to certain stars and zodiacal constellations, and also the metals, which are found in their interior and collect the planetary energies, up to the diamond, symbol of the cornerstone, minerals constitute a symbolic code and express a magical and sacred language that antiquity has known since ancient times. They are believed to attract certain energies, since they serve as altars and dwelling places for the gods; they are capable of performing miracles and cures, since they have supernatural, magical-theurgic and symbolic properties; they have always been used as amulets and talismans, and, in many cases, as oracles which some peoples have forged their destiny.

Hebrew mythology relates that Lucifer, before the fall (Luzbel) had an emerald stone in his forehead.¹ When Lucifer sinned, that is, when the consciousness of unity is lost and the illusion of something that exists outside of God is created, that stone is symbolically torn from his forehead and thrown into the abyss, and from that moment creation becomes, for that fallen being, a dream, an illusion, a fictitious shadow, the pale reflection of the transcendent reality.

The angels, however, carve out of that emerald stone a cup,² an empty space similar to the heart of man, capable of receiving the one immortal spirit, so that he may regain his uncreated nature. That cup or vessel was entrusted to Adam (man) in the earthly paradise; and the relationship to it (and to the Tree of Life) will enable him to maintain that consciousness of transcendent unity, which man in turn loses by reason of his own fall (similar to that of Lucifer) and regains by virtue of the Redemption which returns him to the eternal heavenly abode; to the consciousness of unity which the initiatory process promotes, and which is only attained by total regeneration and inner transmutation.

Like this stony cup, there are certain stones, in all traditions, which have been particularly venerated, as the ancients considered them to possess a special significance, taking them to represent supernatural forces on earth.

Firstly, there are those which (like the Grail itself) are considered to be the abodes of the deity; the so-called "betilos", symbols of the primordial Centre which after the fall was hidden within the earth (and the stone), and whose power and radiance is re-established at the end of the cycle. This Centre, which is

also represented in the symbol of the Sacred Mountain,³ regarded by many peoples as the residence of the gods, shines in all its splendour during the ascending phase of the cosmic cycle, but is hidden in the subterranean world (in the cavern and in the stone) in its descending phase. It is perhaps for this reason that these stones have been seen as miniatures of the mountain; and in any case both (stone and mountain) represent the same Centre or Axis, which remains invariable and unchanging in the course of every cycle.

One of these stones called "betilo" is the one that Jacob put as a headstone when he had the dream of the ladder.⁴ When he awoke from the dream he said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it," adding, "How terrible is this place! It is but the house of God and the gate of the heavens". That stone, in the form of a pillar, which he raised as a memorial of that event, will be considered by Jacob himself as a divine residence. And thereafter⁵ he will erect an altar to the one God, casting out all the strange gods that were in his family.

The black stone representing the goddess of the earth, mountains, valleys and forests, the Mother Goddess Cybele, daughter - like Saturn, whose sister and wife she is - of Uranus and Gaea, the Great Mother of gods and men, has the same meaning of "divine habitation". This "Great Mother" is considered to be the energy of the heavens enclosed in the earth;⁶ and the stone with which she was represented, conical in shape, was seen as a polar and axial symbol, identical to that of the sacred mountain.⁷

The Omphalos of the Delphic oracle (to mention only some of the best known examples) was represented by a stone, symbol of that Centre and abode of the gods. This stone represented the point of communication between heaven, earth and the underworld.⁸

Some of these betili are aeroliths, that is, literally, stones fallen from the sky, as is the case with the "black stones" that figure in many traditions, such as the black stone set in one of the walls of the Ka'ba in Mecca and the black stone of Cybele itself; and although not all betilos are properly aeroliths, each of could be assigned, in some way, a celestial origin, since the Centre they represent is in truth an axis that serves as a path for the descent of celestial energies to the earth and the re-ascent of the earth to heaven.

At the end of time Lucifer retrieves the fallen stone and all returns to the unity of the Principle.

Certain of these stones we have mentioned and many others that some might consider ordinary have been used as oracles;⁹ and stones are found everywhere that have been used as landmarks and even as representations on earth of stellar constellations,¹⁰ confirming the point already made that the ancients regarded some of them as being the earthly manifestation of celestial energies.

Viridarium Chymicum, Daniel Stolcius, 1624 Generatio

We must also remember, albeit in passing, the innumerable stone and carved stones that have represented the various gods,

Spirits, angels and ideas in all peoples. In them these subtle energies come to reside, and men through them, understanding what they mean and going beyond their mere formal and material aspect, can use them as vehicles for the knowledge of those higher forces deposited in them, which are to be transmitted to those who are capable of receiving them.¹¹

The so-called "lightning stones" or "thunder stones" are also particularly remarkable. Although their name seems to suggest it, they are not aeroliths, but stones symbolising lightning that were used as symbolic weapons. Such is the case of certain prehistoric axes,¹² such as the stone axe of Paraçu Râma and Thor's hammer (the origin of the Masonic mallet), celestial weapons capable of both fulminating the enemy and illuminating the essence.¹³

In constructive symbolism, stone plays, as is logical, a preponderant role, with meanings that are often polyvalent and in some even apparently contradictory, depending on the angle from which it is approached.

From one point of view, stone construction is symbolic of the solidification and sedentarisation of a people who had previously been nomadic and therefore built in light and perishable materials. This nomadic state -like childhood- has always been considered closer to the primordial. Man lives less attached to matter and therefore closer to nature and the spirit. In this sense, sedentarisation means, contrary to what the profane vision imagines, a degree of involution with respect to the virginal and innocent state in which primitive man lives, who does not yet build cities and rather sacralises the rough stone by erecting it as a sacrificial altar. The rough stone has been carved by the gods and man is not yet authorised to make any changes to that divine carving.

But when a particular people find their spatial Centre, and become sedentary, and their particular cycle is to reach an apogee or splendour, then the gods command them to build in stone a temple to reflect the celestial city on earth. He must carve the crude stone - which now becomes a symbol of the imperfect lower states - and give it the cubic form of the perfection which that same city makes manifest.¹⁴

The stone is divine matter and in this sense represents the revealed, superhuman, uncorrupted doctrine. But when man literally understands and wants to add purely human materials to the work, he builds with bricks and bitumen a veritable tower of Babel (Genesis XI) and languages and understandings become confused. The building remains unfinished and the energies are dispersed.

That is why we must build in stone. We must rescue, one by one, in their essence, the stones that constitute the revealed cosmogonic ideas; and we must carve them with great care, so that we add strength and beauty to them, giving each one the particular form that corresponds to it without affecting its essential content in any way.

Each worker in the temple is also one of the stones that compose it. Each one has to polish his own stone until he finds the perfection of its very essence. Each stone of the temple is necessary and each one of them contains in its

The temple - and the universe - everything. But there are certain stones that stand out in it in a special way, for their proper placement produces the horizontal and vertical order necessary for the temple to fulfil its task by taking the workers into the subtler states, beyond the temple - and the universe - itself, into the regions of the Mystery.

The stone to be laid last, the secret location of which is unknown to the builders in the earlier grades, and which was therefore "rejected" by the workers in the lower grades, is indeed the first, for it represents the one unchanging Principle which will radiate into the temple as a whole. That Principle, which is the Centre or Axis, is that which gives to the building a direction and a meaning, while, representing itself the primordial Centre to which we have referred, it is also a goal to be followed, a polar North which points the way to the narrow gate through which the purified souls of the workers are to go forth to the empyrean homeland of the blessed.

But in order that this unique spirit may find a home within the temple and within the heart of its builders, they must first "frame" the space in whose centre or axis it will be lodged; thus they will fix the limits of a cosmogonic construction which will be able to carry them towards the limitless. They must first, with the help of the stars, give it a perfect orientation towards the four cardinal points; then, with the help of the square, they will establish the four corners, and at each corner they will plant a stone, which will ensure the construction of a solid and stable structure.

The laying of the "first stone" marks the beginning of the work. This is normally placed in the north-east corner of the quadrangular base of the building, and then the other three stones are placed, in order, in the south-east, south-west and north-west corners, in a circumferential movement. These four foundation stones, called corner stones in English Freemasonry, form the base on which the whole building will rest.

It is said that in the centre of the base of the Jerusalem temple was placed Jacob's stone that magically followed the people on their pilgrimage to the holy land, from which flowed the water of life that quenched their thirst in the desert. This stone is called in Hebrew shethiyah, or foundation stone, and stands, like the four corner stones, at the horizontal height of the base, but in its centre, bearing living testimony - like the omphalos of Delphi - to the original source from which flowed the Primordial Tradition whose descent into the interior of the earth that stone exemplifies.

But where does the plumb line hang from which, from the heart of heaven, it points to the centre, in the very heart of the earth? It hangs from the pole star, from the cornerstone that is a faceted diamond capable of projecting its light to the whole of creation, to the temple that reflects it and to man who, participating in such construction, crowns the work of creation by finding and locating that mysterious stone whose discovery makes him return to the uncreated world of mystery where his immutable essence rests.

This cornerstone is identical in its symbolism to the philosopher's stone,¹⁵ the object of the alchemist's quest. But to find it, it is necessary to descend to lowest and deepest depths of our innermost selves, to the subterranean worlds of the initiatory cavern, following the Hermetic maxim V.I.T.R.R.I.O.L.¹⁶ This cavern is reached through a labyrinth that loses the unqualified and at the same time guides the adepts to the interior of this cavern. It seems that the word

The word 'labyrinth' itself is in turn related to the word 'stone' (Latin lapis), and it is likely that the initiatory labyrinths were originally made of this material. Moreover, the cavern itself is carved out of the rock, and this rock was

-The "stone age" was a sanctuary and place of initiation for men who were in turn called "born of stone". By passing through the labyrinthine trials the candidate visits the interior of the earth, descends into the hells, dies to the profane world, and is born a second time, regenerated, thus regaining his Centre and rising through the Axis into the regions of the true Self.¹⁷

In the Christian temple, which has a rectangular base, the centre is not the central point of the rectangle, but the central point of the immobile base of a cube which, when unfolded, produces the symbol of the cross made up of six squares.

The foundation stone in the centre of the base corresponds in the sephirothic tree to sphere 9, Yesod, Foundation, which is the region where initiation takes place, represented in the Tarot by the 12th card, "The Hanged Man". In Christianity it is assimilated to Peter ("Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church"), and it is no coincidence that Peter was crucified upside down, as is the character in this card, whose inverted position indicates that the initiatory process involves a true 'conversion'. The initiate no longer allows himself to be carried along by the current of the profane world, but on the contrary marches against that current in search of his spiritual origin, his sacred reality.

The four corner stones (placed in this case at the four corners of the immobile base of the cube) are related to the four evangelists and the four gospels, the foundation on which Christian doctrine rests, and are symbolised in plate XXI of the Tarot with the four figures that represent them (bull, lion, eagle and angel). In turn, these four figures correspond exactly to the four fixed signs of the zodiac (Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius), which tells us about the presence of astrological symbolism inside the temple (image of the cosmos). The twelve signs of the zodiac, also represented in the twelve stones (as well as the twelve gates, the twelve apostles and the twelve tribes) mentioned in Revelation XXI, decorate and frame the Gothic cathedrals and Masonic temples.

In the very centre of the Christian temple, a stone or altar (and a cup) is placed at an intermediate height between the centre of the base and the midpoint of the dome. The altar is a consecrated stone with a cavity in it. This stone (and the cup that receives the blood of Christ) could be assimilated to sefirah number 6, Tifereth, the heart of the tree of life and the heart of man, where the heart of heaven and the heart of earth are one heart.

The cornerstone, in pyramidal constructions, is placed at the apex of the pyramid. In those with a circular roof or crowned with a dome or dome, it is placed in the centre of the circle traced with a compass. It crowns the work. It is related to sephirah number 1, Kether (crown), and to what kundaliní yoga calls the sahasrâra chakra, also known as the "crown chakra". In Christianity the "touchstone" or cornerstone is the Christ himself, from whom the revealed doctrine emanates.¹⁸ In the Tarot card XXI just cited, the cornerstone, quintessence, ether and avir, image of the higher states of being and of the eternal consciousness of unity, is indicated by the navel of the woman who there symbolises the heavenly Jerusalem descending to earth.¹⁹

In conclusion we will mention, albeit in passing, the pectorals,²⁰ the rings and crowns²¹ of kings and high priests which were always adorned with precious stones and which convey to their wearers the forces and qualities they symbolise.

Also fossil concretions, corals and pearls, which in various places were used for talismanic and curative purposes; as were the bezoars or 'stones' formed inside the bodies of animals, which were everywhere considered to have magical value; and the so-called gamahez, which are stones with reliefs of plant, animal, human or geometric forms, which are naturally drawn on them and which have been venerated in all traditions, including Christianity.

We can thus see how for traditional thought the symbols of nature, such as the stone (and the same could be said of plants and animals and the cosmos as a whole), are carriers of ideas, forces and subtle energies that are somehow deposited in them. They constitute an order and an archetypal pattern whose understanding can make it possible for man - who contains within himself all these energies and forces, for he synthesises and governs them - communicate with more real and higher aspects of himself and finally to achieve the finding of that mysterious stone which is, for those who can transcend the appearances of things, the only true treasure - hidden in the deepest regions of our being - to which we can aspire.

Viridarium Chymicum, Daniel Stolcius, 1624Septem Metalla

NOTES

1

René Guénon (Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science, chapter III) establishes a symbolic relationship between this stone and the pearl that Hindu iconography places in the "third eye of Shiva". In this tradition, it represents the sense of immortality and the consciousness of eternity that is lost precisely because of the fall.

2

This emerald stone carved like a cup is the origin of the Grail legend. It also represents a spiritual centre and a tradition that has been kept hidden in the earth and secretly passed down from generation to generation. We refer the reader to Article III, just quoted, of Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science. It is interesting to mention here the Emerald Tablet attributed to Hermes, which is also said to have been carved in stone.

3

Such as Mount Meru, Mount Zion, Mount Olympus, and even Golgotha, to mention only a few of the countless sacred mountains that appear in virtually all traditions.

4
Genesis, XVIII.

5
Genesis XXXV.

6
The spirit embodied in matter. The Word made flesh.

7
It is perhaps interesting to recall here that in Christianity numerous 'apparitions' of Mary, the Virgin, occur in a grotto, on a stone.

8
We would like to mention, albeit in passing, the Celtic dolmens and menhirs, as well as the Egyptian obelisks that played a similar role.

9
The pythonesses of Delphi listened to celestial messages through Omphalos himself. The indigenous priests of Talamanca in Costa Rica use four small stones (which they recognise because they can "see" a hidden spirit in them) as a sacred oracle. It would be possibly endless to list the enormous number of stones that in many cultures were considered oracular.

10
In Costa Rica, too, a number of very old, perfectly spherical stones have been found, which seem to have been destined for this purpose.

11
Indeed the last mentioned with regard to the stone is true of any particular sacred symbol. Although the misunderstanding of this has given rise to so many idolatries and superstitions, it has been in times of decadence of peoples, periods which are generally characterised by a loss of spirit which entails the mistaking of the symbol itself - in this case the stone - for the energy, idea or force which it conceals and at the same time conveys and reveals.

12
These axes appear everywhere, and are a further demonstration of the presence, in particular traditions, of certain symbols belonging to what we call the Primordial Tradition.

13
Again we refer the reader to Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science, this time to chapters XXV and XXVI entitled "The Stones of the Lightning" and "The Symbolic Weapons". For further discussion of the following topics on stone in constructive symbolism, see chapters XXXIX to XLIX of that transcendental work.

14

The heavenly Jerusalem described by John in Revelation XXI, which represents the higher states of being after the second death, is cubic ("He measured the city with the reed, and it was twelve thousand furlongs, its length and its length and its height being equal") and is gold and stones ("Its wall was jasper, and the city was pure gold; and the courses of the wall of the city were of all manner of precious stones.") and is of gold and stones ("Its wall was of jasper, and the city was pure gold; and the courses of the wall of the city were of all manner precious stones: the first, of jasper; the second, of sapphire; the third, of chalcedony; the fourth, of emerald; the fifth, of sardonyx; the sixth, of carnelian; the seventh, of chrysolite; the eighth, of beryl; the ninth, of topaz; the tenth, of chrysoprase; the eleventh, of jacinth; and the twelfth, of amethyst.

The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate was made of a pearl, and the city square was pure gold, like transparent glass.

On the symbolism of carving the rough stone into cubic form, which in Freemasonry constitutes the instruction of the apprentice, see Símbolo, Rito, Iniciación. La Cosmogonía Masónica, recently published by Ediciones Obelisco, Barcelona 1992.

15

See in the previous issue of SYMBOLOS (Nº 4, Guatemala 1992) the very interesting text "Explanation of the Emerald Tablet", by Hortelano, translated by Francisco Ariza, who adds his magnificent comments.

16

"Visit the interior of the earth and in rectifying it you will find the hidden stone".

17

Remember also the stone that served as the door to Christ's tomb and was removed at his resurrection.

18

In Islam it is related to the idea of the Chief (Muhammad himself who is succeeded by four caliphs).

19

Remember here what we said about the Delphic omphalos - navel -.

We would like to point out, although it might seem that this is not directly related to the topic at hand, that the 20th and 21st cards of the Tarot have often been related to the 20th and 21st centuries of our era and to the chapters XX and XXI of the Apocalypse, to which we refer the reader.

20

The Egyptian priests wore breastplates with stones, a tradition they passed on to the Israelites, whose high priest wore one, with twelve precious stones, representing the twelve tribes.

21

I reproduce here the text of a 17th century manuscript on the symbolism of the stones of St Edward's crown, in which it is referred to as the 'diadem that assures triumph'. These stones are:

1. Topaz: symbol of the virtues that the king must exercise.
2. Emerald: symbol of the king's justice.

3. Sardonic: symbol of the king's elevation.
 4. Chrysolite: symbol of the wisdom and prudence of the king.
 5. Chalcedony: symbol of the king's courage.
 6. Hyacinth: symbol of the king's temperance and sobriety.
 7. Jasper: symbol of the abundance to be enjoyed by the people.
 8. Chrysopallus: symbol of the king's search for heavenly things.
 9. Beryl: symbol of the king's detachment and purity.
 10. Sapphire: symbol of the king's continence.
 11. Amethyst: symbol of the royal function that the king must not abandon.
 12. Onice: symbol of the king's humility, charity and sincerity".
- Jean Rivi re, *Amulets, Talismans and Pantacles*, Ediciones Mart nez Roca, Barcelona 1986, p. 276.

THE FOUNDATIONAL RITE OF THE CITY

JOSE MARIA GRACIA

The founding rite of the city in the West, specifically that of the Etruscan-Latin tradition, has been the subject of an important study by Professor J. Rykwert¹. The particular rite of foundation of the city falls within the more general field of construction rites, which encompasses the construction of altars, temples, houses, military settlements and in general any territorial planning, however small it may be. The most explicit references to the founding rite of a city in the West have come down to us through the Etruscans², their heirs the Romans and the Greeks, but all the other traditions also have their building rites, which do not differ in content from one another, even if certain "formal" aspects are adapted to the specific circumstances of each place; from the extreme Eastern traditions to the pre-Columbian traditions, via the Western tradition, the aim is essentially to establish a centre on earth from which the cosmogony is repeated, thus recalling the primordial divine act of creation of all manifestation. Establishing this centre involves knowing the "divine will", which in the Etruscan-Latin tradition was obtained by observing the flight of certain birds, in Greece by consulting the oracle of Delphi and in Samnio, a village in ancient Italy, by following the trail of a sacred animal such as the wolf or the woodpecker, in order to finally establish the limits of the space which, by virtue of the rite, becomes sacred.

Thus, every foundation is first and foremost a fertilisation of the virgin earth by the divine spirit, and every fertilisation is a union of opposites in unity. Founding a city means re-founding the Cosmos, repeating the cosmogony, and this re-foundation has a hierogamic character: a sacred marriage between the earth to be occupied and the other prototypical, celestial and Ideal Earth; the one below is structured in the image and likeness of the one above, and that piece of sacralised earth becomes the Centre of the World, a temple under the open sky, the dwelling of the Shekhinah, the "real presence" of the Divinity.³ The foundation of a city is a sacred marriage between the earth to be occupied and the other prototypical, celestial and Ideal Earth.

The foundational rite of the Etruscan-Latin tradition to which we are going to refer consists of a double time that is embodied in a double ritual action. In the first place, and as a condition of possibility, the rite of the *Contemplatio* was indispensable. This part of the rite was carried out by a magistrate: the Augur. The *Contemplatio* consisted of, once a high place had been reached, generally the summit of a mountain which, by virtue of the rite to be performed, became the Axis of the World, the Cosmic Mountain, scrutinising the sky and, according to the topology offered at that moment, noticing two coordinates, two crossed meridians which would configure, suitably drawn on the surface of the

earth, the two main directions or axes of the city. The Augur was the only one capable of determining the exact meaning of the signs seen in the sky, his science was secret; thus, if everything was in accordance with the rite and the signs were favourable, he was in charge of communicating to the others whether or not it was advisable to found a city in the place previously chosen. If the celestial conditions were favourable, the city was thus in-augured; but let us proceed in parts.

As we said above, the Augur noted coordinates in the sky; the point where these intersected was projected onto the ground and this, which became the centre of the city, is what is properly called the templum. The templum was a diagram drawn on the ground of an analogical nature and therefore did not imply a literal transposition of the guidelines noted through the scrutiny of the celestial topology. The templum could be drawn, said or gesticulated, but in any case it synthetically represented the general order of the sky in a given place; in the case of the Augur drawing the diagram on the ground it was generally circular and divided the territory into four parts. The ancient etymologists derive the word templum from *tueri*, to look, to scrutinise, to observe, but, considering its etymological root, there are two more important observations to be made.

In the first place that which derives from temperature, which in Latin means fusion or a well-dosed and therefore balanced mixture of two or more different things; derived from temperature we have "temper" which means, generically, to mix one thing with another to moderate their activities, to fuse their qualities or energies; thus, temple, or temper, is also a union or fusion or mixture; but union of what?

The Augur was the vehicle, "bridge" or "channel" by means of which the three cosmic levels at stake were united through the rite and materialised in a figure or gesture called, as we have seen, templum. In the far-eastern tradition we find a figure analogous to the Augur symbolised by the character wang or King-Pontiff⁴ (fig. 1).

fig.1

Indeed, the character is composed of three horizontal strokes joined by a vertical one; the upper stroke represents Heaven, the lower stroke Earth and the intermediate stroke Man. Guénon notes that the middle line refers to Primordial Man, while the vertical line, as an axis, symbolises Universal Man, who is identified with the Vertical Axis itself. This character of axis is undoubtedly symbolised by the staff carried by the Augur, by means of which he either traced the templum diagram on the ground or, with the same staff, "traced" it by making gestures in the air. Likewise, as Universal Man, the Augur is a "mediator" between Heaven (not to be confused with the visible sky) and Earth (not to be confused with the planet Earth). The Universal Man is properly in the highest sense the "son of Heaven and Earth", being "son of Earth" as mediator and "son of Heaven" as transmitter of the "mandate of Heaven", which on the other hand indicates the simultaneity of the two ascending and descending directions of the Vertical Axis and therefore of the Universal Man, and which, in the extremoriental tradition, corresponds respectively to the function of King and that of Pontiff.⁵ The Augur thus exemplifies the function of the King and that of the Pontiff, which in the extremoriental tradition corresponds respectively to the function of King and that of Pontiff⁵. The Augur thus exemplifies, as Pontiff, Humanity, both from a cosmic point of view, as a specific nature, and from a social point of view, as a collectivity of all men. Thus, the magistracy exercised by the Augur is in reality a pontificate: it is not for nothing that the

The written tradition that the Romans inherited from the Etruscans was under the guardianship of the college of pontiffs.

On the other hand, in the subsoil of the templum a cavity called mundus was built in which three things were housed: the remains of the bird that was the bearer of the good omens (we will refer to it later), a handful of earth brought from a sister city, and the remains of the founding hero⁶. Thus in the mundus the three cosmic levels were "fixed": Heaven (symbolised by the bird), Man (founding hero) - Earth (handful of earth), and only by virtue of being the union of these three cosmic levels can it be said to be a Centre; and it is from this "Centre of the World" that the cosmogony is repeated, demarcating in the territory, that is to say in the horizontal dimension, the "limit of the sacred".

The mundus was a circular cavity and was covered with a stone slab, on top of which an altar was erected where a fire was lit which became the focus of the city. At this precise moment the founding hero gave a name to the city: a secret name, a priestly name and the public name⁷, which is necessarily equivalent to "naming" the three levels mentioned above and of which the city was a synthesis.

Continuing with the etymology of templum, we now focus on the relationship between templum and mandala in the sense that both terms designate a model or pattern⁸. A templum is also a diagram of universal order, a cosmography from which, following a complex system of proportions, a distribution analogous to the cosmic order is established in the sensible order. In the course of the founding rite of the Hindu temple, the Vastu Purusha-mandala⁹ (fig. 2) was ceremonially traced on the ground, as a template, and became an "outline" of what would later become the physical construction of the temple and city. Many ideas emerge from all this, but one is of interest to us: that by virtue of the rite all cities and temples are the same and at the same time unique, because the model (templum, mandala) being the same, the physical construction is adapted to the particular conditions of the chosen place¹⁰. All cities or temples founded according to the rite are the Centre of the World and there are as many "centres" as there are ritually founded cities or temples: the centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere.

fig. 2

But the Contemplatio was not only a work of noticing in the sky the coordinates that would later govern the main characteristics of the city, it was also a "waiting". This "waiting" (contemplating) is an act of recollection in a state of alertness to notice the sign of the sky or prodigy (something out of the ordinary). A sign, an angel, is awaited. This angelic sign or winged figure took the form of a bird, and, in the Roman ritual, the bird chosen was generally an eagle¹¹.

Symbolically the eagle is the messenger of the divine will, it is a solar and celestial symbol, and as a bird it is an angelic symbol and a symbol of higher spiritual states; in the Traditions of the Book the angels are often in the form of an eagle. The eagle is assimilated to lightning and thunder and thus manifests on one level the wills of the supreme god and the transforming action of heaven on earth, i.e. the fertilisation of the mother earth (assimilated to primordial chaos and primeval matter) by the divine spirit¹².

Following the ritual, an expert arrived, the Arúspice (diviner by the liver), who took the bird carrying the omens, cut it open, took out its liver, subdivided it into parts, attributing each of them to a divinity, and found the sign in it. He would read the oracular signs and if he saw the

If they seemed bad, he had to wait, and if they seemed good, he proceeded to what we have called the second ritual action¹³.

This second action was carried out after the directions the main axes of the city had been traced by the surveyor, an office as exalted as that of the Augur, who, with an instrument called a gnomon, traced the *cardo* and *decumanus maximus* in accordance with the course of the sun. *Cardo* means "axis", i.e. the line around which the sun turns, from north to south, and *decumanus* owes its name, according to some ancient treatises, to the contraction of *duodecimanus*, the twelve-hour line between and sunset, i.e. from east to west. The rite performed by the surveyor consisted of three phases: drawing a circle around the gnomon¹⁴, determining the east-west axis in accordance with the course of the sun and its north-south perpendicular, and drawing the square inscribed in the circle. These three phases of the rite also correspond to the three fundamental figures (circle, cross and square) which symbolise the three levels (Heaven-Man-Earth) of the *wang* character described above¹⁵.

Let us specify that just as the *templum* was a diagram of analogical order and its transposition in the territory was not literal, the coordinates drawn by the surveyor did not determine exactly and necessarily the basic guidelines of the main streets; this is so because in its definitive layout there were also considerations of a more pragmatic type concerning the healthiness of the water, direction of the prevailing winds in the area etc., but although these types of considerations were important for the correct distribution of the streets and buildings, they were by no means decisive in the layout of the city; what was decisive was what was established by means of the rite. We could say that the Augur, in tracing the *templum*, points out the subtle directions that order the Earth, the surveyor points out, in a later stage of determination, the squaring of the solar circle on the surface of the earth, and subsequently the area sacrificed is distributed in consideration of the atmospheric, topographical and health conditions of the place. The geometrical symbolism of the complex is therefore in no way modified; on the contrary, it faithfully imitates the original model and is not confused with strictly material considerations. Figure 3 shows the diagram of a city in which the *cardo* and *decumanus* do not coincide with the north-south and east-west axes.

fig. 3

Once the celestial co-ordinates noted by the Augur had been inscribed on the ground and had been specified in the diagram of the *templum*, in accordance with the signs noted by the *arúspice*, and once the elementary axes were available which would order the morphology of the city, the limits of the city's territory were demarcated. This demarcation consisted of establishing a quadrature: perpendicular to each axis, four furrows were drawn to form a square. This furrow, called *sulcus primigenius*, was drawn by the founder of the city using a bronze plough, symbolising the sacred marriage between heaven and earth. The plough as a symbol of fertility is attributed to the god of thunder and justice; it is no coincidence that bronze (a metal of great hardness obtained by the union of tin, copper and silver) is also a symbol of inflexible justice, incorruptibility and immortality and was used for cult instruments and actions of a religious nature because, among other meanings, it evokes the marriage of the moon and the sun¹⁶. The plough was carried by a white heifer and a white bull, the bull walking on the outside of the furrow and the heifer on the inside.¹⁷ The heifer symbolises the earth or primordial substance; in ancient Mesopotamia the Great

Mother or the Great Cow was goddess of fecundity, and is therefore a symbol of fertility¹⁸. The bull evokes the fertilisation of the earth and thus the "creative" side which is complemented by the "receptive" side symbolised by the heifer. Thus the sacred marriage took place on two levels: a vertical union between Heaven and Earth, by means of the plough, and a horizontal one, already in the order of the manifested, between the two elementary principles of all manifestation: the masculine or creative and the feminine or receptive. The animals had to be white because, in a ritual sense, this was the colour of passage, of initiation; the white animals sacralised a previously profane terrain through the rite: the earth had been initiated and formed a firm base for construction.

The founder carried the plough obliquely so that the earth raised by the plough fell on the inside of the furrow. The indentation made by the plough was called a fossa and the soil removed by the plough was called a "wall". Ovid relates how Romulus, the mythical founder of Rome, opens a deep ditch and fills it with fruit, covers it with earth, erects an altar over it and then sets out to mark out, with the plough, the limits of the city, which will become the wall¹⁹. This wall, due to its strict ritual condition, was sacred and therefore could not be crossed; when it was necessary to establish an exit to the outside, the founder raised the plough and the strip of land not fertilised by it was what was called the "gate", which, as it had no sacred value, could be crossed (fig. 4).

fig. 4 Diagram of the city

The building rites, which properly correspond to sacred architecture, are a "fixation" in the space of time in constant cyclical movement, the squaring of the circle is actually established. This fixation has an alchemical character as it is ultimately a "coagulation" which translates in practical terms as a quartarisation, partitioning or qualification of something quantitatively indeterminate; as Burckhardt points out "through ritual practice cosmic reality is 'crystallised' and this crystallisation resolves itself into a geometry which is an inverted image of the timeless, it is Being 'embodied'"²⁰.

Ritual is the intelligence of action. Symbols and myths harmoniously weave our reality with Reality, incessantly reminding us that this polarity is only apparent, for in reality there is only One and, consequently, that existence is only something contextual, something truly relative that only becomes absolute when identified with Being. Symbols, myths and rites concern us as they concerned our ancestors, and if all these matters are concealed today, for it is certainly a concealment and not a disappearance, it is by the very nature of the symbolic that it veils its deepest meaning to the one who uses it and reveals it to the one who invokes it.

Finally, here are four images taken from different traditions, which constitute true mandalas for meditation, since any study of a symbolic order is necessarily a meditation.

fig. 5

In Figure 5 an ancient Assyrian seal depicts by means of a circle and a cross the walls and the main streets that organise the territory and the life of the citizens, attributing to each quadrant a trade or organisation.

fig. 6

Figure 6 - the city of Baghdad founded in AD 762 by al-Mansur - shows on the diagram forty-five villages surrounding a space at the centre of which are the palace and the mosque.

fig. 7

Figure 7 is a diagram of Mecca, clearly showing the Ka'ba in the centre of the sacred precinct, around which the various buildings are clustered.

fig. 8

Figure 8 shows an engraving representing the site of Tenochtitlán, where the eagle carrying omens can be seen perching on a cactus, the site that was to be the centre of the future Aztec city.

NOTES

1

Rykwert, Joseph, *The Idea of the Town*, Faber and Faber Ltd, London 1976. Herman Blume, col. *Biblioteca básica de Arquitectura*, Madrid 1985.

2

Etruria was an aristocratic country occupying central Italy, between the Tyrrhenian Sea, the Arno and the Tiber, and was organised according to a confederation of twelve "dodecapolis" cities; they were great astrologers and magicians and developed the art of metallurgy with great skill.

3

Guénon, R., *Aperçus sur l'ésotérisme chrétien*, Ed. Traditionnelles, Paris 1988, chapter III.

4

Guénon, R., *The Great Triad*, chap. XVII.

5

The Pontifex, literally the "bridge builder", represented in Greece by Iris, the "messenger of the gods". R, Guénon, *Autorité spirituelle et pouvoir temporel*, Editions Traditionnelles, Paris 1975, chapter IV. See also *The King of the World*, Luis Cárcamo Ed., p. 15, by the same author.

6

Even today, a boot in which objects of a certain value are deposited is still called a "world".

7

In the case of Rome the secret name was Amor, the priestly name Flor and the public name Roma.

8

Template or templet means template, synonymous with pattern or model.

9

Mandala means "circle" and is a symbol or "image of the divine". Vastu (from the root vas, to dwell, to be in place) would be the total extension of ordered being, Purusha the cosmic Man, origin of existence, thus the Vastu Purusha-mandala is the spatial symbol of Purusha, of the divine presence at the centre of the world. Cf. Rykwert, J. op. cit., p. 206.

10

It is beyond the scope of this study to describe the founding rite of the Hindu temple. Let us point out, however, that the Hindu equivalent of the mundus described above is the gharbha "bosom of the temple", which was itself a bronze vessel containing the riches of the earth: precious stones, metal, earth, roots and plants, and which was placed in the centre of the temple.

11

In the case of the foundation of Rome, the bird chosen by Romulus and Remus was a vulture. In Greco-Latin traditions, the vulture was also a divinatory bird, the bearer of omens, as it was associated with celestial, purifying and fecundating fire.

12

In Greece, the eagle was also associated with oracular activity: it stopped on the vertical of Delphi, following the course of the sun, every time the oracle was consulted; M. Eliade reminds us that delphys means womb: thus the oracle was the receptacle of divine revelation (symbolised by the eagle). Let us also remember that in ancient Greece the founding hero did not undertake his activity without first having consulted the Pythia of Delphi.

13

The Arúspice was a true scientist, for his aim was not the knowledge of phenomena or reality, but their symbolic exegesis, a science he acquired through oral tradition, the study of sacred books and his own accumulated experience.

14

Gnomon designates both a bronze rod driven into the ground at the centre of the circle and a complex instrument for the more exact and more extensive tracing of the axes. The term "exact" here does not have the meaning of "precision" but of progressive determination.

15

Burckhardt, T., *Principios y métodos del arte sagrado*, Lidiun, Ed., Buenos Aires, p. 17, where it is noted that this particular rite of orientation has a universal scope, which is why we transpose its symbolic reading to the western foundational rite.

16

The word langala (plough) and the word linga derive from the same root that designates both the laya (spade for ploughing the land) and the phallus. The linga is

In Hindu mythology it is a symbol of Shiva as the causal and procreative principle. In China a triangular shaped piece (like a plough) of jade is often found in the centre of temples and evokes the sacredness of the act of procreation symbolising hierogamy.
Chevalier-Gheerbrant, Dictionary of Symbols, p. 649.

17

The founding hero, the plough, the heifer and the bull are the four elements involved in the demarcation of the boundaries of the city, which together with the fertilised earth are five. The number five, the sum of the first even and the first odd, is a symbol of union; it was a nuptial number for the Pythagoreans and mainly symbolises the sacred marriage between the active celestial principle and the passive earth principle. In the Chinese tradition, five is the number of the cross and the square, for these are inconceivable without the centre which forms them; thus, symbolically, five is a central number formed by the square of the cross and its centre, symbolising the totality of the sensible world.

18

Chevalier-Gheerbrant, op.cit., p. 1043.

19

This strictly ritual and therefore symbolic wall should not be confused with the strictly defensive city walls. These were built later and their location did not coincide exactly with the ritual wall, so that between it and the walls there was a strip of land "promœrium" or "postmurum" which was also of a sacred nature as it was "inside the wall".

20

Burckhardt, T., op. cit., pp. 9-11.

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THE SYMBOLISM OF THE OPENING RITUAL OF THE

FRANCISCO ARIZA LODGE

The opening and closing ritual of the Masonic Lodge is, together with the catechisms or instruction manuals and the symbols that allude to the construction, the only one of its kind in the world.

legacy (but undoubtedly invaluable) that present-day Freemasonry has received from ancient operative Freemasonry. This legacy has allowed for the continued preservation of the symbolic description of cosmogony, and therefore the possibility of access to its knowledge and understanding. In this way the fundamentals of the Royal Masonic Craft, which exemplify the process leading to that Knowledge, have been perpetuated through time, and with it the Spirit of this initiatory organisation in the West. This would be the main reason why Freemasonry continues to be a living tradition with all the elements necessary to make spiritual realisation effective. On the other hand, the fact that many members of Freemasonry are ignorant of the true initiatory and esoteric content of the Order to which they belong, in no way alters the validity of Masonic initiation, nor diminishes its strength for those who are truly interested in serious and orderly inner work, and who can see beyond the formal and "institutional" appearance with which this tradition is clothed and "covered" to express the primordially of its message, which constitutes its essence and its very reason for being.

In this first part, we shall concentrate on the symbolism of the ritual of the opening of the Lodge, a ritual which consecrates, in the true sense of the word, the work carried out there. In fact, through this ritual, what was once a mere place becomes a temple, that is to say, a sacred and significant space. Thanks to the action of the spiritual energies conveyed by symbols, words and ritual gestures, it could be said that this place is "transmuted" into something essentially different from what it was. Hence the importance of the ritual being practised as perfectly as possible, following as scrupulously as possible what is prescribed in it, and without altering, suppressing or modifying for no reason whatsoever any of the elements that constitute it, since it is precisely in respecting them that the efficacy of the rite itself lies. Naturally, this does not mean that ritual gestures are repeated in a "mechanical" way, but that the ideas they convey, which speak of an archetypal reality, must be understood at the same time as they are performed, being one with them, since the rite is nothing other than the symbol made into a gesture. Therefore, the ritual must be experienced as what it really is, as a whole or an ordered and harmonious whole in which each of its constituent parts corresponds to each other. It is therefore a living organism, which acts according to the stimuli it receives, i.e. as soon as it is consciously put into practice. That is why if one of these parts were missing, the whole ritual would suffer, losing the "strength and vigour" of the spiritual influence that is transmitted through it.

For the sake of explanation, we can divide the opening ritual into four parts:

- Ensure the "coverage" of the Lodge.
- Checking the initiatory regularity of the attendees and determining the symbolic space.
- The "lighting of the lights" and the layout of the Lodge chart.
- Description of the symbolic time and consecration of the Lodge.

Robert Fludd, *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* T. II, 1619

Securing the "cover" of the Lodge

The opening of the Lodge begins with a ritual check on the "security" or "protection" of the Lodge. This is the "first duty of a Watcher in the Lodge", for the Lodge must be fully "covered" from the influences of the outside or profane world. This cover assimilates the Masonic temple to the "initiatory cavern", the symbolism of which is related to the cyclical idea of concealment and withdrawal of traditional doctrine in a "place" inaccessible to the "gaze of the profane". This cover is provided directly by the Guardatemplo, the official who, as the word itself indicates, has the function of "guarding" and "covering" the temple. In carrying out his office, the Guardatemplo, by actualising the idea that the symbol manifests, ritualises the effective "separation" that must necessarily exist between the profane world and the reality of the sacred that is experienced in the Lodge. This separation is symbolically marked by the entrance portico, which is said to be "neither inside nor outside the Lodge". It is therefore an "intermediary" space, a place of "passage" or "transit" between the outside and the inside of the temple, between the profane and the sacred. This is indicated by the ritual "marches" or "steps" that take place from the door of the temple to the middle of the columns J and B that support the Portico. It is precisely in this intermediary space where the Guardatemplo is located, this space being under his guardianship, watching over it (without leaving it at any time) so that the Masonic work is carried out and fulfilled in perfect harmony. This function makes the Manger a true "guardian of the threshold", an entity that prevents the passage of those who are not qualified to receive initiation, but at the same time "opens" the doors of the temple to those who truly meet the necessary conditions to receive it. In the ancient rituals this function was also performed by the "Terrible Brother", whose name is quite illustrative in this respect.

Checking the initiatory regularity of the attendees and determining the symbolic space.

Once the temple is "under cover", one proceeds to check that all members of the Lodge are in their proper place within the Lodge, ensuring also that they are in possession of the sign of "al orden", which is part of the "secrets" of the degree, and which refers to the proper inner disposition to receive the traditional teaching conveyed by the rites and symbols. The "second duty of a Warden in Lodge" is to make sure of this. In this sense, if the lodge guard is responsible for the "external" security of the Lodge, the First and Second Wardens are responsible for its "internal" security. It is for this reason that the term 'watchmen' (which includes the idea of being "awake") with which they are designated, is perfectly in keeping with the respective functions of these two officers, who, together with the Worshipful Master, represent the "three lights" of the Masonic Lodge.

They "watch over" the initiatory regularity of all the brethren who stand on the "columns" of the Noon (South) and Septentrion (North), which are none other than the broad sides of the rectangle of the Lodge. To check this regularity, the two Wardens go round their respective columns, which, like everything else in the Lodge, is carried out in a ritualistic manner. Indeed, in order to go to the columns under their supervision (the Noon for the First Warden, and the Septentrion for the Second Warden), the two officers must first "cross" each other in the West (West), which they do again when they pass in front of the Altar of Oaths, situated towards the East (East), and then return to their respective platforms. It should be noted that this route constitutes the first ritual "circumambulation" that takes place in the Lodge, and with which the four cardinal points that determine the space of the Lodge, between the columns J and B that support the Portico and the three steps that lead up to the East, are clearly marked. This rectangular space constitutes what is called the Hikal, which is properly speaking the base-plane of the Lodge (analogous to the horizontal plane of the world), in the full extent of which the integral development of the ritual works takes place, that is to say, where they are manifested and made possible.

But that determination, or spatial 'framing', is 'mapped out', if I may say so, beforehand by the ritual greetings or gestures that the two watchers make to each other during the 'circumambulation'. Each gesture significantly describes a square, four in all: two when they greet each other in the West and two when they pass through the East side, which is called the Debir, situated at a higher level than the base-plane of the Hikal.

These four "square" gestures would be analogous to the four foundation stones of any building, from which the whole edifice can be erected. It is precisely at this point in the opening ritual that it is a question of laying the foundations, or the foundation, of the work to be done in the Lodge, its firm and "secure" base on which this work can be consecrated. Indeed, only if those who "decorate" the pillars of Noon and Septentrion are "in place" and inwardly "in order" will the Lodge be "properly covered", and thus be able to penetrate "into the ways that have been laid out for us", that is, into the path that leads to the Light of Knowledge.

Pointed cubic stone (one side)

The illumination of the Temple and the layout of the Lodge square
It is this Light that is first sought when one enters these ways. And the light that illuminates the Lodge, like the light that illuminates the world, comes from the East, where the luminous Delta, the symbol par excellence of the Great Architect of the Universe, is situated. And it is at the foot of the East that the three principal officers of the Lodge (the Worshipful Master and the two Wardens) "unite" to "receive" the Light that symbolically emanates from the Delta, which is the same as the ritual reception and transmission of the spiritual influence that through the respective functions of these three officers will indeed "direct" the workings of the Lodge. At least so it should be in a Masonic workshop whose members were sufficiently aware of the sacred reality expressed through rite and symbol, taking it into themselves and to the extent of each one's possibilities.

We said earlier that these officers are also called the "three lights", thus showing that they, or rather their functions, are the bearers of the spirit which illumines the Lodge, and which the sensible light manifestly symbolises. In this respect, and as Guénon points out, in the ancient operative rituals, the meeting or concurrence of three masters was necessary for a Lodge to be able to work regularly, each of them representing a certain spiritual archetype or divine creative name. This symbolism has remained in modern Masonry, and these three Masters are none other than the Worshipful Master and the two Wardens, whose respective functions, as we are seeing, are linked with an attribute, aspect or name of the Great Architect: with Wisdom the Worshipful Master, with Strength the First Warden, and with Beauty the Second Warden. And Wisdom, Strength and Beauty are the names given to the three pillars or "three little lights" situated in the very centre of the Lodge, and arranged in the form of a square. These three pillars are also called "stars" (a direct allusion to their celestial symbolism), which are made "visible" and present in the Lodge through the invocation of the divine names. The rite of the lighting of these pillars, which accompanies the invocations, marks the precise moment when the Lodge, which until then had been in darkness, is fully illuminated, producing a passage from "darkness to light". It is therefore an essentially cosmogonic rite, analogous to the Fiat Lux of the Word creating cosmic order by fertilising the primordial chaos, that is to say the

The whole of all the possibilities of manifestation that are actualised through this demiurgic action.

The invocation of the divine names and the lighting of the three pillars jointly performed by the three principal officers of the Lodge are ritualising, making present, that generative gesture of the Architect. The opening of the Lodge would therefore symbolically describe a process analogous to the creation of the world. On the other hand, the term Logia comes from Logos, the Word or Verb, and also from linguistic terms that designate light, such as the Greek *liké*. In fact, the Masonic temple (like any sacred precinct) is a symbolic image of the cosmos, which in turn is the universal temple and the direct work of the Creator. And just as the Creator "hath ordained all things in number, weight and measure", so the Lodge is built with Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, or with Faith, Hope and Charity, the three high virtues corresponding respectively to each of the three pillars. The triple invocation appeals to the Wisdom of the Architect as the true architect of the work of creation, over which he presides; to his Strength as the will that sustains and perennially regenerates it; and to his Beauty as the energy that "adorns" it by imprinting it with the exact and harmonious measures that make up its internal and external order, revealed primarily through geometric and symbolic structures.

The invocations of these divine attributes also recall, or reiterate in the memory of those present, what is said in the Psalms: "Unless the Eternal builds the house, they labour in vain who build it". It is only after these invocations, and thanks to the spiritual influence contained therein, that the space of the Lodge (of the universal temple), previously "framed" by the "circumambulations" of the two Watchers, is illuminated, or ordered, to its full extent.

It is at this point that the Book of the Sacred Law (the Bible) is opened, and the Compass and Square are placed on it, which is carried out by the Lodge Master, an official who is considered to be the "guardian" of the rite. The book and the two instruments constitute the "Three Great Lights" of Freemasonry, situated above the Altar of Oaths, that is to say at the geometrical point where the union of heaven and earth, of the vertical and the horizontal, is symbolically effected. This union is represented by the position, in the form of the Star of David, or Solomon's seal, of the compass and the square, both symbols of heaven and earth. The Lodge thus appears as the place where the conjunction of heaven and earth is made manifest, and thus the communication between the higher world and the lower world. In this sense, it should be remembered that in the rich iconography described in Masonic Lodge pictures, a ladder (symbol of the axis) is sometimes shown resting its lower part on the altar with the three great lights, while its upper part touches the heavens. The member of the Lodge is thus shown the path he must follow in his internal process, a vertical path, towards the "high", without forgetting, however, that this ascent is only possible thanks to the understanding of the traditional doctrine. This is articulated and expressed through the teaching conveyed by the Book of the Sacred Law (which contains the revelations and theophanies transmitted to the components of the "traditional chain"), and the Compass and the Square (instruments used to trace the prototypical measurements of Heaven and earth applied to construction through the use of sacred geometry).

Companion Table

Immediately after the appearance of the "Three Great Lights", the Officer Expert arranges the Lodge picture in the middle of the mosaic pavement, as follows

It is so called because it reproduces to scale the dimensions of the Lodge, which is a "long square" or rectangle, its long sides being exactly twice as large as its broad sides. In addition, the most significant symbols and emblems of the degree in which the Lodge is working, whether it be the Apprentice, Companion or Master, which constitute the initiatory hierarchy of the Masonic tradition, are drawn on the chart. The chart thus forms a visual and graphic synthesis of the symbolic teaching contained in each of these degrees, and thus also represents an indispensable support for meditation and concentration within that same teaching. The Lodge picture could be considered as a true Masonic mandala. In this respect, it should be remembered that in ancient operative Freemasonry, the Lodge picture was drawn directly on the floor, using chalk and charcoal. This custom, as far as we know, is no longer preserved in present-day Freemasonry (except in the Emulation Rite, in which the tracing of the Table is accompanied by the reading of certain texts), which, if it has been called "speculative", it is precisely because it has forgotten certain techniques of transmitting the spiritual influence practised by the ancient Masons, as is undoubtedly the case here. The importance of directly tracing Lodge chart derives from the value that the ritual gesture itself has as a vehicle of that influence, since, being the symbol in movement, the ritual gesture "actualises" (as long as it is done consciously) the idea or energy-force contained in it in a potential or virtual way. For the same reasons, the one who draws the picture (the Expert) and all the symbols that make it up, also becomes an intermediary vehicle of those same energies.

We could even say that this vehicular function is actually performed by all the members of the Lodge, who, in "contemplating" the orderly development of the layout executed by the Pundit, participate equally in it. This contemplation, or ritually accomplished "concentration", must necessarily generate a bond of subtle order between each and every member of the Lodge, a bond which, once established, becomes the support for the manifestation of spiritual influence. It will then be understood why the presence of the Lodge Tablet is essential during the development of Masonic work, bearing in mind, moreover, that for the operatives, the place where it is deposited becomes a veritable "sacred ground". For this reason, the square occupies a central position in the Lodge, right in the middle of the Hikal, and is also the axis around which the ritual marches or "circumambulations" take place, and the important rite of the Chain of Union is performed.

Description of the symbolic time and consecration of the Lodge
Once the chart has been drawn, or simply laid out in its proper place as is usually the case, the Lodge can be said to have all the elements necessary for the work to open "regularly", for "all is according to the rite". As stated in the rituals, the work begins at "Noon Sharp", when the Sun is at its zenith and its light falls "perpendicular" or "plumb" over our world, the verticality of that light being a further symbol of the invisible axis linking Heaven and Earth, Noon is the moment when the Sun stops its course at the top of the celestial vault, a phenomenon that, when taken to the cycle of the year, is repeated during the Summer and Winter Solstices, the latter corresponding to Septentrion and "Midnight Sharp", when these same works end. From noon onwards the downward curve of sunlight begins, which finds its lowest point (nadir) at midnight. And the same happens from the Summer Solstice to the Winter Solstice.

Considered symbolically (i.e. by establishing the corresponding analogies between the natural order and the spiritual order) this descent of the sunlight also expresses the "descent" of the sacred influence within the initiatory organisation, which is formally ritualised in the invocation made "to the Glory of the Great Architect of the Universe "1, and with which the

works remain definitely "con-sacred". In this respect, it would certainly be interesting to recall what Guénon mentions in *The King of the World* about the "real presence" of the Divinity in the manifested world. He says: "It is to be noted that the passages of Scripture where it (the Shekinah or "Glory") is especially mentioned are mainly those which deal with the institution of a spiritual centre: the building of the Tabernacle and the construction of the Temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel². Such a centre, constituted under regularly (italics) defined conditions, must indeed be the place of the divine manifestation, always represented as "Light"; and it is curious to note that the expression "very luminous and very regular place", which Masonry has preserved, seems to be a reminder of the ancient priestly science which governed the construction of temples"³.

If we bear in mind that the Temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel (which are essentially one and the same) are considered to be the models of the Masonic temple, then we can understand why the "Glory of the Great Architect" (i.e. his "Presence") is invoked at the opening and consecration of the work, culminating this true (and periodically repeated) founding rite, which in reality represents the opening of the Masonic Lodge.

NOTES

1

The same invocation heads all Masonic documents and writings.

2

In the Prologue of the Gospel of St. John (patron of Freemasonry) there also mention of the "Glory", when it is said: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his "Glory", when it is said: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his Glory". We will point out that in some lodges which have preserved the traditional spirit of Masonry, the Prologue to the Gospel of St. John is read before the Altar of Oaths and in the presence of the "Three Great Lights" at the time of the opening and consecration of the work.

3

The King of the World, chap.

THE CLOSURE OF THE FRANCISCO ARIZA

MASONIC LODGE

As we saw in the previous issue of *SYMBOLOS* (No. 6, Guatemala 1993), the opening of the Lodge allows the "creation", or rather, "re-creation", of a sacred time and space, a protective frame within which Masons carry out their work "under cover" from the profane world (profanum: outside the temple), exercising the Royal Craft or "Great Work" of cosmogony. And all of this perfect correspondence with the "plans of the Great Architect of the Universe", a

whose "Glory" and "Name" precisely these works are fulfilled, for as we read in the Holy Book: "Unless the Eternal builds the house, those who build it labour in vain".

When these come to an end, the Master of the Lodge, aided by the other Officers of the Workshop, proceeds to the closing of the Lodge, to its closure and recollection (clausura, from "clau", "key"), which is done, as with everything in Freemasonry, in a ritual and symbolic manner. With this closure, the Lodge has completed its cycle of manifestation, having developed to its own limits (indicated by the symbolic time) all the possibilities contained therein, and the light, whose irradiation has illuminated these works, progressively withdraws into itself, thus returning to the origin or beginning from which it sprang. The Word, the Word, the Logos (whence Logia), that is, Being, returns to concentrate itself in the "Silence" of the ineffable and unmanifested, this being the profound meaning of the "oath of silence" which all the members of the Workshop take before leaving the Temple for good.

The Lodge, the symbolic image of the World, ritualises with that double expansive (centrifugal) movement of opening, and contractive (centripetal) movement of closing, the cadence of the universal rhythm, of cosmic expiring and aspiring, for this is the Law or Rule to which everything manifested is subject, whether it be a being, a world or the whole of Universal Existence. Every birth is followed by a process of expansion and development, at the limits of which a reverse period of contraction, retraction and finally extinction begins. In this respect, the closing of the Lodge coincides with the "Midnight o'clock", i.e. with the "end of the day", which is itself a complete cycle analogous to larger cycles, in which it is included.

The withdrawal of the light referred to above is ritually represented by the Wise Brother when he closes the Book of the Sacred Law and picks up the compass and square, that is, the "Three Great Lights" of Freemasonry, and then goes on to "roll up" or "erase" the chart of the Lodge (which the same Wise Brother "unrolls" or "draws" during the opening), so called because the most important and significant symbols of the degree in which the Lodge is working are depicted therein: either the Apprentice, Fellow or Master degree. This is followed by the extinguishing of the "Three Little Lights" which illuminate the sum of the pillars of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, an extinguishing carried out by the Master of the Lodge and the two Watchers (closely related to the symbolism of those pillars), called the "Three Lights". We count, therefore, nine lights in all, and this is related to the idea of cycle, for nine is, as we know, a cyclical number because of its direct link with the circumference, which expresses the complete development of what is virtually contained in its central point, thanks to which the circumference itself exists. Thus, the nine lights that illuminated and generated the space and time in which the works were developed, are effectively concentrated in the centre from which they emanated.

Consequently, all that was to be realised and manifested in the Lodge, in the Workshop, has already been accomplished, but before retiring the workers receive their "wages", reaping what they have sown or built up in , and which are the fruits of their action, in short of their intention, of what they have contributed, and to what extent, to the effective realisation of the plans of the Great Architect. This is the meaning of the Masonic (or initiatory) "salary", a word derived from "salt", a substance which in Alchemy is considered to be the synthesis or fruit of the action of sulphur on mercury, i.e. the result of the union or conciliation of a certain energy, and the result of the union or conciliation of a certain energy.

The Mason is a celestial energy, active, yang, and an earthly energy, passive, yin. In short, it is a matter of "reconciling opposites", or "reuniting the dispersed", and that, like the alchemist, the Mason must work on himself, which is the main reason for his craft.

It is not by chance, then, that Masons receive their wages in columns J and B (situated at the entrance and therefore also at the exit of the Lodge), for they symbolise respectively the active principle and the passive or receptive principle. When the Lodge works in the Apprentice degree, the salary is received in column B, and when it works in the Fellow degree in column J. We may add that both columns allude to the necessary "establishment" or "foundation" which makes possible the building of the Temple, a building which is in reality nothing other than the very process of inner realisation¹. The teachers, on the other hand, receive their salary in the "Middle Chamber", or in the "centre of the circle", since their function is not directly linked to that construction (which is carried out by the apprentices and companions), but to elaborate their plans according to those of the Architect or Universal Being, which implies a direct knowledge (not mediatised) of the cosmogony and its laws, as well as of the ontological and metaphysical order².

For all this, the Masonic wage also alludes to the virtue of justice, since each one receives in his column what he deserves, which in reality is what he has, for as the Gospel says: "For to everyone who has, to him shall be given and he shall have more than enough; but from him who not, even what he has shall be taken away" (Matthew 25:29), and where it is also stated: "let him who has ears to hear, let him hear". Only then will "the workers be content and satisfied" and have "the right to rest", for the justice in question is none other than the reflection in the human order of the law of equilibrium and harmony that governs the cosmic order, itself a reflection of divine Justice³. Having received their due, the workers will thus be able to take their leave "in freedom, fervour and joy", for they will have fulfilled their actions, i.e. their work, for "the general good of the Order (of the Order) and of the Lodge in particular".

But perhaps the most significant and important rite of the closing is the "chain of union", made up of all the members of the Workshop "linked" with one another around the three pillars of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty and the picture of the Lodge, i.e. at the very centre of the Temple. Certainly, as stated in the ritual, this chain is the symbol of Masonic fraternity, but we might well ask on what basis this fraternity owes its existence and why it manifests itself through the chain of union, for surely it expresses something quite different from any kind of "comradeship" or the like. Perhaps the answer lies in the words and gestures made by the Master of the Lodge moments before the chain is formed: "Brethren, following the ancient custom (tradition) there remains but to close our secrets in a safe and sacred place", and then he raises his right hand to his heart, as if to indicate that it is there, in the heart, in the purest and most central place of being and where it communicates with its true essence, that the "secrets" are to be kept and closed. And it is well known that the heart is the tabernacle of the true Temple, that which according to the Scriptures "is not made with hands", for nothing individual or particular can penetrate it. These secrets are therefore not only those which refer specifically to those of the Masonic Order and the Lodge (and which must be safeguarded from the "prying eyes of the profane"), but also, and one might say above all, to the very essence (or "quintessence") of what one has received from the traditional teaching conveyed by the symbols and rites, of that which one has truly understood and assimilated in one's innermost self of

That teaching, in short, of the effective and intimate link that each being maintains with his one and eternal Principle. This, then, is what "links" or "unites" the brothers to each other, and thus they form the chain of union, which is the union with the Unity of the Self, and in respect of which the individualities, because of the very limitations to which they are subject, do not count at all. In connection with the latter, we wish to point out that at the beginning of its formation the chain is not completely closed, that is to say, it appears as "broken", and it is claimed that this is so because of "our imperfections" (or limitations), which will only disappear by invoking the sacred names of Wisdom (Faith), Strength (Hope) and Beauty (Charity)⁴, after which the chain finally closes⁵.

However, the fact that the chain is unclosed also indicates (and here we have a case of the double meaning of symbols, which must always be borne in mind in order to understand its various meanings) that at the same time it remains "open" to anyone who wishes to join it, this being perfectly indicated when at one point in the initiation ceremony the neophyte or recipient is received precisely into the chain of union. This gives us to understand, among other things, that the chain continues to live and transmit the teaching and Knowledge, in this case through the cosmogony expressed by the Masonic symbols and rites, since tradition means exactly transmission, and this must continue to be perpetuated so that it continues to exist and is an ever-present and current possibility⁶. This is expressly alluded to by the Master of the Lodge when, at the conclusion of the rite of the chain of union, he exclaims: "May the Light that has illuminated our work continue to shine in us so that we may finish the work begun in this Temple!

NOTES

1

We would like to point out in this regard that the word "foundation" was synonymous with "Truth" in some pre-Columbian languages, such as that spoken by the ancient Mexican Nahuas, which was also related to the fact of "standing", which, curiously enough, is also closely related to what is understood by "column" in "Freemasonry".

2

Needless to say, we are referring here to an initiatory structure which is that of Freemasonry considered in itself as an esoteric and traditional organisation, regardless of whether this is considered as such in the many present-day Obediences and Lodges, in the great majority of which the idea of spiritual realisation through Masonic symbols and rites is as non-existent as in any organisation of a profane type. On all this, we refer the reader to the interesting study entitled "A propósito de la Masonería", which appeared in No. 5 of *SYMBOLOS* (Guatemala, 1993).

3

In this sense, and in order to understand this symbolism, it should be borne in mind that columns J and B are located to the West of the Lodge, to the West, the cardinal point where the sun () sets, and which corresponds to the Autumn equinox in the annual cycle. The Jewish tradition celebrates at the beginning of Autumn the feast of the "Great Atonement" (the most important next to Passover, celebrated at the beginning of the Spring equinox), during which time the

It implores God's justice in both the individual and social order, and prefigures the "Jubilee" of the complete cycle of humanity, for it is in Autumn that this tradition (in accordance with all traditions) locates the "end of time" or the "return" to the primordial origin. Likewise, Christian tradition celebrates in this season the feast of Saint Michael (29 September), the archangel who imparts divine Justice during the "Last Judgement", as he "weighs" the souls and places each one in its place in the universal order, as can be seen in Christian iconography, on the lintels of many Romanesque doorways and Gothic cathedrals.

4

These divine names or attributes allude directly to the biblical verse that says that God made everything (the cosmic order or work of Creation) "in number, weight and measure". We see then that what the Masons invoke in the chain of union is none other than the creative power or energy of the Great Architect ("or Almighty Great Architect of Heaven and Earth"), and expressed as "Word", "Light", and "Life".

5

See, in this respect, the last chapter of Symbol, Rite and Initiation, in Seven Master Masons. Obelisk, 1992

6

In this respect, the chain of union extends not only to the "Masons scattered over the whole surface of the Earth", but also to all men of today and of all time who have fulfilled, are fulfilling and will fulfil their path to Knowledge, the Masonic chain of union becoming then a symbol of the "golden and immemorial" chain, that is to say of the Perennial and Universal Tradition. We would also like to add that the name chain of union is also given to the twelve knotted cord which runs round the top of the walls of the Lodge, the twelve knots being a representation of the twelve signs of the zodiac, that is to say, they refer directly to the celestial symbolism and its reflection in the earthly order. On all this see chapter LXV of R. Guénon's Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science. Also the article "The Symbol and the Masonic Rite of the Chain of Union" in SYMBOLOS No. 3 (Guatemala 1992).

SYMBOLIC ASPECTS OF SOME OPERATIVE MASONIC RITUALS FRANCISCO ARIZA

In certain Masonic lodges in England and Scotland, which have retained much of the ancient operative rituals, three highly significant and important festivals continue to be celebrated, charged with a rich symbolism that testifies to the strength and vigour of the Masonic tradition, heir to the ancient mysteries, which, as mysteries, retain an unalterable presence and a permanent relevance over time. These are the Commemoration of the Foundation of the Temple of Jerusalem, the Commemoration of the Death of Master Hiram and the Ceremony of the Dedication of the Temple. The first of these festivals, the Foundation of the Temple of Jerusalem - also called the Temple of Solomon - is celebrated during the Jewish Passover season, specifically in the month of April (Ziv), which is the second month in the Jewish calendar, when, according to the Bible (I Kings, VI, 37-38), its construction began. April is called the month of "the ears of corn", for it is in this month that the ears of corn begin to grow thanks to the renewed impetus of the vital energies of nature (expression of the

cosmic energies), thus manifesting its full regenerative force. The second commemoration, the death of the master Hiram, takes place on October 2nd, coinciding in turn with the Jewish feast of Yom Kippur, or "Great Atonement", a time when the fruits ripen and the whole of nature prepares for its winter gathering and concentration, but which also heralds the Jubilee and the Last Judgement, which coincide with the "end of time" and the descent of the Heavenly Jerusalem to Earth. The third commemoration, the Ceremony of the Dedication of the Temple, also takes place during the month of October, on the 30th, and is marked by the readings from the biblical passages in which Solomon's words to the Lord invoking his presence in the tabernacle of the newly completed Temple are mentioned (I Kings, VIII, 22-30). This is the consecration of the Temple, the construction of which had taken exactly seven years, a symbolic number that assimilates its construction to the creation of the world, which was formed according to Genesis in "seven days" or temporal cycles.

As we can see, the three celebrations revolve around and are directly related to the Temple of Jerusalem, the essential reference point of the Masonic lodge (and also of the Christian temple), of which it is the symbolic model, just as the Temple of Jerusalem itself is, in turn, the symbolic image of the Celestial City. And this would also explain why the development of Masonic initiation, in its various degrees, necessarily involves a knowledge of the symbolic structures of the lodge (which are those of the cosmos), a knowledge that must be accompanied, for its full realisation, by the transmission of the sacred words, ritual signs and tokens, inseparable (as they form a whole) from the legends and stories that allude to the various episodes of the sacred history of the Masonic order (which begins to be told from the construction of the Temple of Jerusalem, although in some chronicles this history goes back to the very origin of humanity), which allows it to be brought up to date by living the reality to which this history refers.

We spoke of the number seven, and we must say that this is the cosmogonic number par excellence, being also the number of the initiatory hierarchy in many traditions, for the process of spiritual realisation reproduces step by step (degree by degree) the cosmogonic process itself, including that of nature itself, which with its periodic and perennial cycles and rhythms invites us to the contemplation of a precise and harmonious order, in which man is inserted and participates entirely, whether he knows it or not. Likewise, in the operative lodges mentioned above, there are also seven initiatory degrees, all of them related to the building and completion of the temple (made in the image, we repeat, of the universal order), the seventh and last of these degrees corresponding only to the Three Grand Masters of Freemasonry, who represent and assume in their role King Solomon, King Hiram of Tyre and Hiram Abi, who is none other than Master Hiram, builder of the Temple of Jerusalem, and whose ritual and symbolic death is commemorated, "remembered", on 2 October. We should add, in this respect, that seven is also the symbolic age of the master in all current Masonic Rites, thus establishing an analogical relationship between that degree and the completion of the Royal Art or Great Work of cosmogony (his learning and effective knowledge), opening up from that moment onwards the possibilities of realisation of a truly extra-cosmic and metaphysical order². Thus, this symbolic death actually represents an overcoming or "exaltation" of the cosmic domain (of the duality inherent in the actions and reactions of the bipolar energies that determine all manifestation), which is experienced within the consciousness as a synthesis or conciliation of these same energies, which brings about the birth of the metaphysical and spiritual reality, symbolised by the "resurrection" that follows Hiram's death.

In the operative lodges, the ceremony of accession to the Grand Mastery is called the "Annual Grand Drama" ³ because it ritualises the death, quest, and

Finally, the discovery of Hiram's body, after which the installation of the new third Grand Master begins, who, together with the other two, will direct the lodge for a year, at the end of which (coinciding with the date of October 2nd) a new third Grand Master will be installed, incarnating Hiram in his function. On the other hand, in these lodges, only the first two Grand Masters (representing, we repeat, Solomon and Hiram of Tyre, respectively) are Grand Masters for life, while it is only the third Grand Master (Hiram Abi) who is "replaced" each year, or complete cycle, by whoever has been chosen to accede to the Grand Mastership.

Only in this way is it possible to periodically relive what is undoubtedly the most important rite in Freemasonry: the death of Hiram and his resurrection in the new master. And when we say Freemasonry we are referring both to that which preserves the ancient operative rituals (almost completely unknown, if not totally unknown) and to that which has come to be called "speculative" (which is what is commonly, albeit rather badly), born at the dawn of the 18th century, that is to say at a time when, for reasons which would take too long to explain, but which basically have to be attributed to cyclical reasons, the rituals of the old operative Freemasonry (of medieval origin) were practically forgotten, which meant an irreparable loss of the very rich symbolic and spiritual legacy that had until then shaped the Masonic tradition. However, despite this loss and the differences that may exist between the operative and speculative lodges, the Masonic Order is essentially one. Our assertion is not gratuitous, for although different in many ways (and there is certainly a superiority of the former over the latter), both nevertheless retain intact the ritual of the death and resurrection of Master Hiram, a ritual which is what truly gives Freemasonry as a whole its identity and unity. Moreover, the symbolism of this ritual expresses as accurately as possible the deeper meaning of one of the principal currencies and functions of the Master Mason, which is to "spread the light, and gather the dispersed" 4. Hence also the title of "Prince of Masons" given to Hiram, for it is under his direct inspiration, i.e. what he represents on the initiatory and symbolic plane, that Masons receive the fullness of their initiation, and Freemasonry, by extension, continues to transmit the spiritual influence which alone justifies its existence.

Turning to the ceremony of installation of the third Grand Master, an important and significant part of the ceremony (and one which demonstrates the operative origin of this degree) consists of the seven steps or rungs which the candidate must ascend, kneeling on the ground, to the "throne" (that is exactly what it is called) where the three Grand Masters sit. Each step alludes to a science or liberal art, which together describe the entire cosmogony. The candidate for the Grand Mastery has to answer questions on each science, the first step corresponding to Grammar, the second to Rhetoric, the third to Logic, the fourth to Arithmetic, the fifth to Geometry, the sixth to Music and the seventh to Astronomy⁵. Having passed the test, the new Grand Master is received in the "abodes of power", so called most probably because that part of the lodge is assimilated to the Debir, which was the "Holy of Holies", Tabernacle or Sanctasatorium of the Temple of Jerusalem, and in which the "Ark of the Covenant" was deposited, being, consequently, the most sacred and innermost place of the temple⁶.

The seven steps to be ascended constitute the line which separates, and at the same time unites, the Debir from the Hikal (the "Holy"), which is that part of the temple which extends from that dividing line to the entrance portico, presided over by the two columns Jakin and Boaz, the symbolism of which plays an important role in Masonic teaching. If in the lodge the Debir, by virtue of its position

The Hikal in turn symbolises the Earth and the horizontal, whereby the ascent is experienced as an axial journey from Earth to Heaven, or from a reality conditioned by spatio-temporal limitations, to the truly unconditioned and eternal. In the same context, we should add that in the operational lodge the three Grand Masters are symbolically located on Mount Moriah, considered to be one of the three sacred mountains of Freemasonry (the other two being Tabor and Sinai), since it was on its summit that the Temple of Jerusalem was built. The sacredness of this mountain makes it a true Axis of the World, and therefore a nexus of union and communication between Earth and Heaven⁷. The candidate's "ascent" then takes place along this axis, and the steps of the seven sciences also constitute an ascent through the degrees of knowledge, which, once assimilated, lead man to reintegration with the Unity of the Self, which in Masonic language is equivalent to identification with the energy or creative power of the Great Architect of the Universe⁸.

Hence, during the installation ceremony of the third Grand Master, direct reference is made to one of the most ancient symbols of the Great Architect: the swastika. The explanation of this important symbol is said to last 70 minutes, a time which must also be understood in a symbolic key, for here again we have the number seven as a constitutive and essential part of this ceremony. The swastika is closely related to the Pole Star, located at the very centre of our universe, the only point that remains unchanging while the entire celestial vault revolves around it. The four arms of the swastika also represent the four positions (oriented to the four celestial cardinal points) of the constellation Ursa Major, which, in fact, constantly revolves around the Polar Star⁹. There is, therefore, a direct link between this celestial rotation and the Pole Star itself, for this rotation emanates from itself, and as René Guénon says, this movement "is not just any movement, but a rotation that takes place around a centre or an invariable axis... the Centre imprints movement on all things, and since movement represents life, the swastika therefore becomes a symbol of life or, more precisely, of the vivifying role of the Principle with respect to the cosmic order"¹⁰. This is also why the swastika is the symbol of the Pole, which is the Great Unity (called Tai-Ki in the Far Eastern tradition), or the Centre of centres, or the Sun of suns, for just as the whole of universal Existence arises from it, it reintegrates into it at the end of its cycle of manifestation. The latter is closely related to initiation (because of what we have said above about the analogy between the cosmic and the spiritual process), for initiation consists in the gradual and gradual reintegration of all the dispersed elements of the individual being into the Self, which implies the universalisation of that individuality, which thus passes from the periphery of the ceaseless movement of the Wheel of the World (of its indefinite rotation or turning) to the Centre of that same Wheel.¹¹ The latter, the initiation, consists in the gradual and gradual reintegration of all the dispersed elements of the individual being into the Self, which implies the universalisation of that individuality, which thus passes from the periphery of the ceaseless movement of the Wheel of the World (of its indefinite rotation or turning) to the Centre of that same Wheel.¹¹

On the other hand, in the seventh degree of the operative lodge, the Grand Architect is given the Hebrew name of El Shaddai, meaning "God Almighty", who is invoked at the end of the ceremony of the Dedication of the Temple by the first Grand Master (Solomon) in these terms: "I have finished the work which my father commands me to accomplish", in clear reference to the completion and culmination of the work. In the architectural symbolism (widely developed in the operative rituals) the idea of the "finishing" of the Temple is present in the symbolism of the "cornerstone" (since it is effectively the last stone to be laid, "crowning" the whole construction), whose position is essentially axial, being located in the very centre of the dome (hence the name "keystone" to designate this centre), which represents the celestial dome within the construction¹². The cornerstone is equivalent to the Pole Star¹³, and both symbolise, each in its order, the Almighty Great One.

Architect, vivifier and sustainer, beginning and end, alpha and omega of all Creation¹⁴.

All this symbolism is summed up in a moment at the installation of the third Grand Master when four squares are gathered together to form the swastika. Three of these squares belong to each of the three Grand Masters, and the fourth is the one above the Holy Book. This swastika is, in turn, a replica or reflection of the one drawn on the ceiling (sky) of the lodge, from the centre of which a plumb-shaft descends towards the very centre of the earthly swastika formed by the four squares, thus symbolising the union between Heaven and Earth¹⁵.

Because of its connection with the Pole and the Centre of the World, the swastika is considered to be one of the main symbols that refer directly to the Primordial Tradition, the cradle of humanity, and whose origin, according to all traditional sources, was originally polar or hyperborean. And the fact that this symbol constitutes an integral and fundamental part of this operative ritual proves once again that the symbolism, rites and mysteries of Freemasonry come, through an uninterrupted transmission over time and with all the necessary adaptations, from that same primordial Tradition. Perhaps this is also what Guénon is referring to when, at the end of his article on "The Letter G and the Swastika", he states "... that polar theory has always been one of the greatest secrets of the true Master Masons "¹⁶.

NOTES

1

Information about these operative rituals is taken from Pierre Girard Augry's article "The operative survivals in England and Scotland", which appeared in No. 3 of the French Masonic journal Villard de Honnecourt, a review of which appeared in No. 2 of SYMBOLOS.

2

The idea of "beyond the cosmos", or "beyond physics" (metaphysics), is present in the full expression of the symbolic age of the Master Mason: "seven years and more".

3

"The Great Annual Drama" is also called "Ancient Drama", the word "Ancient" being understood in a sense that is not merely historical, but above all that which was done "in the Beginning", i.e. in illo tempore or in mythical and vertical (supra-historical) time, which makes its permanent actuality possible. And what was done "in the Beginning" is the work of Creation, the cosmogonic act or rite par excellence, which the creation myths of many traditions regard as the result of a sacrifice, fragmentation or division of the primordial Unity. Such is the case in the Kabbalah when it speaks of the "disintegration" of the body of Adam Kadmon (the "Universal Man", identical to the Great Architect of the Universe and the Hindu Purusha or Prajapati), whose dispersed members make up the entire manifested universe. This is also the case with the myth of Osiris in ancient Egypt, or Dionysus Zagreus among the Greeks. In Freemasonry, the death of Hiram exemplifies, on the human level, this primordial sacrifice, and the ritual search for his body throughout "the whole Earth", and its final finding, is basically equivalent to the "reconstitution" of the "Word".

lost", which is the ineffable Name (Being) of the Great Architect. See chapter XLVI of R. Guénon's *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*.

4

We refer entirely to what Guénon has pointed out on several occasions in this respect, for whom the degree of Master in present-day Freemasonry is not the result "of a 'speculative' elaboration of the eighteenth century, but of a sort of 'condensation' of the content of certain higher degrees of operative Freemasonry, intended to fill as far as possible a lacuna due to the ignorance in which the founders of the Grand Lodge of England were in regard to them". *Ibid.*, ch. XVII.

5

The liberal arts are, moreover, in correspondence with the seven planetary heavens, which in medieval Hermetic-Christian and Islamic cosmogony were the intermediaries between the Earth (and the sublunar world) and the heaven of the Fixed Stars and the Empyrean, where the divine Throne resides.

6

This inner precinct is what in the Kabbalah is called the "Holy Inner Palace", which is the true Centre or Heart of the World and of man, and the place of manifestation of the Shekinah, the "divine Presence". This inner chamber is also symbolised by the centre of the six directions of space, through which the "seventh solar ray", also identified with the Axis of the World, passes.

7

Needless to say the importance of the role that these three mountains have played in the sacred history and geography of the Judeo-Christian tradition, profusely described in the Christian temples built by the medieval Masons and Companions. We would add that in the operational lodge the three Grand Masters symbolically dwell on Mount Moriah.

8

It should be clear that when we refer to the degree of Master we do so from the perspective of what this degree means initiatively, which is the reintegration into the primordial human state, and therefore the full development of the qualities inherent in that state. It is quite another matter that in Freemasonry today the vast majority of those who hold this degree (conferred almost always for the purely practical needs of the lodge) have done so in the least. The same can be said of the degrees of Apprentice and Companion. But this is a problem which in no way affects the reality and the deeper meaning of the spiritual and initiatory experience, and of symbols and rites which serve as its vehicles and supports, for its origin is supra-human.

9

As is well known, this boreal constellation is made up of seven stars, which in Hindu tradition are considered to be the symbolic abode of the seven Rshis or legendary sages who transmit the Perennial Wisdom to humanity through the different cyclic periods through which it passes. On the other hand, the first name of this constellation was not Ursa Major but the name of the Balance (or Libra), before the latter became part of the Zodiac. However, that name continued to persist in ancient China, where it was designated as the "Jade Balance", jade being a symbol of perfection (see R. Guénon: *The King of the World*, chap. X). Perhaps it is in the number of these

stars, and the ideas of order and perfection which they suggest in traditional symbolism, where we should find the origin of the Masonic expression "seven make it just and perfect" in relation to the number of Masons (significantly called the "seven lights") which are necessary for the constitution of a lodge and the regular transmission of spiritual influence.

10

R. Guénon: *Fundamental Symbols...*, chap. VIII.

11

Hence it is stated in the rituals that the Master Mason can only be found in the "centre of the circle", which is equivalent to the "Middle Chamber", the name given to the lodge working in this degree.

12

It is therefore not by chance that among the main Masonic symbols referring to the master's degree is the "pointed cubical stone", where the "cubical stone" corresponds to the companion and the "rough stone" to the apprentice. There is also an analogy between what is meant by the "pointed cubical stone" and the "philosopher's stone" in alchemical hermeticism, the attainment of which is also the culmination or "crowning" of the mysteries of cosmogony. In the Christian tradition Christ himself is also designated as the "cornerstone".

13

In the Far Eastern tradition the Pole Star is called the "Great Extreme", and this is precisely the position that the "cornerstone", also called the "capstone", occupies in the temple. *Ibid.*, chap. XLIII.

14

In this regard, it is interesting to note that the opening of an operational lodge is only effective when the three rods carried by each of the three Grand Masters are brought together to form a right triangle (also called "Pythagorean"), since these rods are in the proportion 3-4-5, the numerical value of the name El Shaddai in Hebrew.

15

The pole is the only point that remains immobile in the rotation of the Earth on its axis, perfectly reflecting the immobility of the celestial pole. In construction symbolism, the terrestrial pole corresponds to the "foundation stone" (which is the centre, and the synthesis, of the four stones located at each of the corners - or cardinal points - of the building), a direct reflection on the base plane of the "cornerstone", which is obviously identified with the celestial pole. In this sense, and in relation to the four squares that form the swastika, we will say that these, arranged in another way, constitute the four angles or corners of the temple.

16

Ibid., chap. XVII.

FRANCISCO ARIZA

One of the undoubtedly exciting research topics among the many that René Guénon's work offers is precisely the one that we have to develop in these pages: the influence of this work on Freemasonry, knowing beforehand that we cannot address, for obvious reasons, all that Guénon said in this , which was very important and extensive. This obliges us to be necessarily synthetic in our exposition, and to point out only a series of points that we believe could offer a global vision of what Guénon's message represents for Freemasonry, one of the few initiatory paths that still survives in the West.

And when we speak of this influence, we do so in the knowledge that the work bequeathed by Guénon, as a whole, constitutes not the exposition of any traditional form, but the adaptation to our time of the metaphysical doctrine and the perennial cosmogony, whose depository is none other than the primordial Tradition, also called the unanimous and universal Tradition, because its origin is non-human, or better still supra-human, being the very expression of eternal Truth and Wisdom.¹ For Guénon, all traditional forms (including those that have within them a religious or exoteric component) derive from this primordial Tradition, and draw their legitimacy as such from it. This includes, of course, the Masonic tradition, as confirmed by the various legends recounting its mythical origins, as well as its symbolic codes and initiatory rites, which are its hallmarks and its very *raison d'être*. Perhaps it was the survival of these codes that was the main reason for Guénon's interest in Freemasonry, an interest that was also fully justified by the fact that, far from being in full vigour, it was submerged in a profound decadence that was leading it inexorably to the brink of its disappearance as an initiatory organisation, and therefore of being completely absorbed by the profane world.

, at the beginning of the century, when Guénon began to write his first articles in the journal "La Gnose" (precisely at the time when he received Islamic, Taoist and Masonic initiation), Freemasonry was suffering the same fate as other initiatory and traditional organisations of the West, such as the Order of the Temple and the Order of the Rose-Cross, to which we will refer later. The lack of understanding of the symbols and rites by the majority of its members was the main cause of this decline, which for Guénon already began when, at the beginning of the 18th century, Freemasonry lost much of its former operational character (inherited from the builders and craft guilds of the Middle Ages) as the "speculative" became predominant in it, which, far from constituting, as Guénon himself points out, "a progress, implies, not a deviation as such, but a degeneration in the sense of a lessening, which consists in the neglect and forgetfulness of all that is realisation, because this is what is truly 'operative'".²

This oversight would then be the true origin of the "speculative" within Freemasonry (or of the preponderance of the latter to the detriment of the operative, for the two need not exclude each other, just as they did not exclude each other in ancient Freemasonry, where the speculative corresponded to virtual initiation and the operative to actual realisation), This is not to say that Freemasonry has definitely taken on a "speculative" form, for this would mean affirming that its symbols are only "theory", and do not contain, as they do, the elements necessary for spiritual realisation. As we have said before,

The "speculative" is only a point of view, insufficient, moreover, because of its mental and reflex character, to effect the passage from "potency to act", from the virtual to the effective, or, as it is said in Masonic language, to go from "darkness to light". This must be made clear if we are to understand what Guénon really meant by Freemasonry, for beyond the state of degeneration in which, for whatever circumstances, an initiatory organisation finds itself, this "changes nothing of its essential nature, and likewise the continuity of transmission is sufficient so that, should more favourable circumstances arise, a restoration is always possible, this restoration being necessarily conceived as a return to the 'operative' state".³ This is why he insisted, almost every time he addressed the Masonic theme, on pointing out the differences between the "operative" and the "speculative", for this is a question of capital importance which must be clearly understood if one wishes to understand the true nature of Masonic initiation, or rather of initiation considered in itself, regardless of the traditional form through which it is expressed. For Guénon, "operative" is not synonymous with manual work, nor even with "practice", but rather with inner work, in the alchemical sense of the term, i.e. what the being can do with himself in order to achieve his own spiritual realisation, which is what really matters, manual work being no more than a support like any other to bring about this realisation. It is not by chance then that Freemasonry, like the Hermetic tradition, is also called the "Royal Art", identical to the "Great Work" of alchemical transmutation. The "tools" of this inner work are none other than the rites and symbolic codes, their practice, study and meditation, for they convey the cosmogonic and metaphysical ideas whose actual knowledge will determine the degree of development of the being and the link with its one and eternal Principle.

However, if the symbols and rites, or the spiritual energy they convey and support, are not "vivified" by the Spirit, that is, if they do not actualise and promote the quest for Knowledge, which is ultimately what it is all about, Masonic initiation will be only "virtual", and then it can be called "speculative", but not in itself, but with respect to whoever considers it so. It is quite likely that for most Masons today their Order is just that: "speculative", or theoretical, unrelated, or in any case reduced to a minimum, to any kind of inner realisation, which includes the development of the possibilities of universal and transcendent order inherent in human nature. But the Guenonian work is addressed above all to those Masons who are truly dedicated to the quest for Knowledge, hoping to find in the Masonic symbols and rites the teachings and methods necessary to make their initiation effective. That is to say, those who feel themselves to be heirs of their traditional legacy, and are receptive to its message, considering it to be alive and active (and not an outdated and anachronistic relic of the past), and also knowing with certainty, and this is essential, that this legacy forms part of the "golden chain" or Philosophia Perennis directly emanating from the primordial Tradition.

It is therefore on the basis of an awareness of the true universality of Masonic symbols and rites that any work can be undertaken to recover, as far as possible, the doctrinal elements that have been lost, or have been altered, in the transition from the operative to the speculative. And it is at this precise point that Guénon's work acquires its true function with regard to the Masonic Order, offering to those Masons linked to the Spirit of their tradition the "guidelines" from which to carry out this restorative work. If the work he has bequeathed to us has been considered "providential" for the Masonic Order, it is for one fundamental reason: because it restores the original meaning of its symbols and its rites, which constitute the Masonic doctrine and method.

respectively, integrating them into the Perennial Cosmogony, which is akin to traditional forms. Hence also, any attempt to restore the "operativeness" of Masonic symbolism must necessarily require prior knowledge of that work, in which one will find all that is necessary for such an attempt to bear fruit and become a reality, including, of course, knowledge of traditions other than Freemasonry, but identical to it in their essentials. This is perfectly normal and even necessary, for admitting the universality and sacredness of the symbolic codes of all traditions, whether living or extinct, knowledge of these codes is of course of inestimable help in understanding Masonic symbolism itself. Guénon's work itself is an example, and even a model, of what we are saying, for it constantly refers to the relationships, reciprocity and correspondence between the various traditional doctrines, in their identity through their symbols, rites and myths, making us see that all these doctrines derive, thanks precisely to this identity, from a single and unique Doctrine or Tradition. That work is not that of an individuality (in any case this was only the support), but that of a traditional function, which Guénon "incarnated" for reasons that we will never know (nor do they matter too much), for as it is said in the Scriptures "the Spirit blows where He wills", how and to whom He wills. And also that "the ways of the Lord are unsearchable". As far as the purely metaphysical doctrine and the fundamental symbols of cosmogony are concerned, Guénon was a faithful interpreter of the Tradition, the most important of our century, and his limitations in this case were those imposed on him by human language itself, which, as he himself said so many times, is incapable, by its analytical and discursive form, of expressing in their full breadth the universal truths, which are of a supra-human order, and which can therefore only be apprehended through "intellectual intuition", to the awakening of which the symbol and what it reveals contribute principally. Guénon never tired of repeating that the traditional message is not systematic, i.e., that it does not lend itself to any kind of rational and mental classification, for the very object of that message is the world of ideas and archetypes, i.e., of truly unlimited possibilities of conception, which are naturally above any system or form, which always tends towards more or less narrow limitation.

For this reason, Guénon considered very important the creation of lodges focussed on the investigation of symbols and rituals, for which it is essential that the members of these lodges possess sufficiently broad and deep doctrinal knowledge for such work to bear the desired fruits, and to allow what was "dispersed" to be "re-united" again, which would be in accordance with one of the basic principles of Freemasonry, which is to "spread the light and gather the dispersed". We can say that Guénon's work, insofar as it is the expression of universal principles and ideas, can be seen as that clarifying "light" which Freemasonry needs as a guide to climb the downward curve in which it finds itself at present. And here we would like to recall that Hermetic expression which states that "when all seems lost, all will be saved". And although this expression refers to a certain moment in the process of initiation itself, it can also be extrapolated to the whole of a tradition, in this case to an organisation which is precisely initiatory, which, although in its essentials it remains as virginal as in its origins (which enables it to continue to transmit spiritual influence to those who are capable of receiving it), nevertheless, as an institution, it is inevitably subject to the passing of time and its cyclical decay. In a sense, it is the nature of man, a pilgrim in a foreign land, to "wander" on the "wheel of the world", whereas Tradition (what it reveals) remains unchanged at the centre of that same wheel, to which it gives life and meaning.

Thus, the role that such lodges could play would be essential to make Masonic symbols and rites "operative" again, knowing in advance that this will be the case for a very small number of Masons, but sufficient, on the other hand, for Freemasonry to regain its "strength and vigour", to use a common Masonic expression. This is one of those cases where quality (or quality) matters infinitely more than quantity. However, in order to be effective, these studies, far from being limited to a purely theoretical (i.e. "speculative") level, must be considered by those who carry them out as a support and integral part of their own internal work, a condition which is indispensable if the results to be achieved are to be based on a sufficiently solid and strong foundation, born of the intimate conviction that the "intention" which moves them is in conformity with the heritage received from the Tradition.

It is evident that this "intention", or will, is to be taken here in its precise etymological sense, that is, as a "tending towards" (from in tendere), or "tendency" towards which the whole being is directed or "orientated", which is equivalent to following an order in the upward direction indicated by the "Axis of the World", communicating that being with its Principle, which in Freemasonry is called the Great Architect of the Universe. In fact, the word initiation, from the Latin in ire, means nothing more than 'entrance' or 'beginning', and is linked to the idea of setting out on a path: the path of Knowledge. In The King of the World, Guénon clarifies the symbolic representation of this intention or ritual orientation: "this, in fact, is properly the direction towards a spiritual centre, which, whatever it may be, is always an image of the true Centre of the World".

The words of the Gospel, which are also part of certain Masonic rituals, could be applied here: "Seek and ye shall find; ask and ye shall receive; knock and it shall be opened unto you". There must then be a real "commitment" made to the Spirit of the Masonic Order so that the "virtual" becomes effective and becomes a permanent reality; that the potential, in short, becomes actualised, and enables man to find and know himself in the fulfilment of his true destiny. This commitment is constituted by the initiatory "bond", by which the being, linking himself with the Tradition, assumes, or gradually assumes (hence the idea of degrees), that it and he are one, that is to say that the message conveyed by the Tradition is identified with the one who receives it, and vice versa. Only then can Freemasonry, its message or transmission,⁴ reveal its content and promote effective inner realisation, thus justifying the meaning of its own existence as an initiatory organisation.

This idea appears frequently in Guénon, especially in his two books dealing specifically with initiation: *Aperçus sur l'Initiation and Initiation et Réalisation Spirituelle*. These volumes are invaluable for understanding the true nature of initiation, as they set out the fundamental principles that structure its process, and for Freemasons in particular they undoubtedly constitute a doctrinal guide that enables them to recover a teaching that was an integral part of ancient operative Freemasonry. The ideas developed therein are, therefore, a perfect complement to the study of the symbols and an effective means of understanding in depth the meaning of the rites and their practices, vehicles and supports, we repeat, of spiritual influence.⁵

For Guénon, the initiatory bond is nothing other than the reception of that influence which, being of a strictly spiritual and metaphysical order, is always identical to itself, immutable and eternal, whatever the symbolic vehicles and traditional forms through which it manifests itself. Such a bond refers, to use a Hindu term, to the *sûtrâtmâ*, or "thread of Âtmâ", the breath of the Spirit that binds together the manifold states of being,

and all of them with their Principle, which is their deepest and truest identity. In this connection, we must remember that some of the old Masonic manuals began with the following series of questions and answers: "What is this secret? This means, among other things, that Freemasonry is itself a "secret", or a "mystery", preserved in its innermost core over and above the specific form which a traditional organisation necessarily takes, and that this secret is inviolable by its very spiritual nature, having nothing to do with the "secrecy" fostered by occult sects, pseudo-initiatic sects and the like. It is a secret or mystery that can only be known to those who surrender to it, for as it is said in the Zohar, "Wisdom is revealed only to those who love it".

* * *

Further, Guénon points out⁶ the similarity between the "secret" (secretum) and "sacred" (sacratum), adding that "it is a question, in both cases, of that which is set apart (secernere), reserved, separated from the profane domain". And he continues: "likewise the consecrated place is called templum, whose root tem (which is found again in the Greek temnô, to cut off, to separate, whence temenos, sacred enclosure) also expresses the same idea; and 'contemplation' is still linked to this idea by its strictly 'interior' character". These words lead us to consider the fundamental role played in the Masonic tradition by the Lodge, the Temple or "sacred precinct" which, according to the ritual formula, is to be "under cover", that is "separated" and "set apart" from the relative, and therefore illusory, reality of the profane world, this word, profane, meaning that which is literally "outside the temple" (profanum). But in addition, the Lodge, the Masonic Temple, represents a true synthesis of the universal order (of Cosmogony), and therefore an extremely important symbolic model whose structure the Mason must know perfectly well, thus forming an integral part of the teaching itself.

initiation.

The Lodge is consubstantial to the Masonic Order, for it must not be forgotten that the origins of the Order go back to the building of the Temple of Jerusalem, or Solomon's Temple, which the Lodge itself reproduces in its essential outline. Moreover, it is in the Lodge, within the "sacred precinct", that all ritual work is carried out, and it is for this reason that the Lodge is also regarded as a "Workshop", a reminder no doubt of operative times, but still a valid term for those for whom initiation and its process is the exact equivalent of the "Royal Art" or "Great Work". Indeed, Guénon stated on several occasions that the most important thing in Freemasonry is the performance of the ritual, which is the real Masonic work, firstly because the rite is nothing but the symbol itself in action, and therefore is not separate from the idea that shapes the symbol: it is that very idea manifesting itself, and that is why it is the vehicle for the transmission of the spiritual or supra-individual influence. And secondly, and as a consequence of this, because this action is always performed in accordance with order, that is, in accordance with the very laws of the cosmos, for this word, cosmos, in Greek means precisely "order", which is by the way the exact translation of the Sanskrit rita, obviously identical with the word rite.⁷ Cosmos, order and rite (i.e. the symbol in action) are thus three equivalent terms, hence the necessity that the ritual gesture be performed as perfectly as possible, because in this way one enters into direct correspondence with universal Harmony.⁸

Freemasonry itself identifies and is one with that Harmony, and for its members it is "the Order", understood, of course, as synonymous with the cosmic Order itself, as if, indeed, it were but a direct emanation of it.

Of course, this is not unique to Freemasonry, for the same could be true for

This is true of all initiatory and traditional organisations. But in Freemasonry, because it derives from a tradition of builders, who understood the cosmos as an architecture, and architecture as an imitation of the cosmic model, this relation to the universal order becomes more evident and is in its very raison d'être. Moreover, the name of the Great Architect given to the spiritual principle under the inspiration of which all Masonic works and rites are performed, is more than sufficient reason for there to be no doubt about it. And it is that Principle, which Guénon identifies with the Hindu Viswakarma, or the "Spirit of Universal Construction",⁹ that is transmitted, or at least its germ or virtual seed, in the rite of Masonic initiation, and that is always "present" in the performance of the rite when is, as stated above, an "action done according to order". That spirit is conceived as a "light", and the development of the spiritual germ implanted by the initiatory influence will be seen as a progressive "illumination" of human consciousness,¹⁰ an illumination which is analogous "to the original vibration of the Fiat Lux which determines the beginning of the cosmogonic process by which the 'chaos' of possibilities will be ordered to become the 'cosmos'". The initiatory "illumination", which is a "second birth", thus has the same effect on the being as the action of the divine Word or Verb in projecting the Fiat Lux into the chaos or primordial matrix, from which the world is also born.

Guénon likens this chaos in a certain sense to the "outer darkness" of the profane state, from which the recipient proceeds before his entrance into the Temple, an entrance which will be for him, in effect, a passage "from darkness to light". There is thus a whole set of correspondences and analogies between the cosmogonic process and the initiatory process, "and thus initiation is truly, according to an otherwise very general character of the traditional rites, an image of 'what has been done in the beginning'".

According to this "general character", in addition to the initiatory rite itself, the "image of what has been done in the beginning" is repeated by Freemasonry in the ritual of the opening of the Lodge, an opening which is undoubtedly a cosmogonic act, and therefore a source of symbolic teaching invaluable for understanding the meaning of initiation itself.¹² Indeed, until the moment of its opening, the Lodge remains in "darkness", or in a potential "chaos" that will be progressively "illuminated" and "ordered" by the action of the rite, an action that will determine the creation of a sacred space and a sacred time, since the energy of the symbol will have been fully actualised, The Lodge will then become "a very illuminated and very regular place", a Masonic expression that has continued to be preserved, and which Guénon says represents "a reminder of the ancient priestly science that governed the construction of temples".¹³ That science is Geometry, which the operatives identified with Freemasonry itself, for the art of building, that is, architecture, is the development the ideas contained in geometrical forms, understood in their purely qualitative aspect, which is what they have always had in Freemasonry and in all traditions. It is therefore not by chance that in Freemasonry the Great Architect is also called the "Great Geometer of the Universe".

Indeed, geometry is the Masonic science par excellence,¹⁴ closely related to the science of numbers, for geometry is really the body of number, but number considered not as a figure, which serves only for quantitative computation, but as ideas of a metaphysical order which in manifesting themselves organise the Intelligence or invisible structure of the cosmos, generating its inner dynamics or universal Soul, and with it the cosmic Rite and the possibility of life under all the forms in which it expresses itself. To speak of number is to speak, as the Pythagoreans thought, of an energy or force in action, of a divine power which, by taking shape in the receptive substance of the world and of man, actualises it and makes it intelligible, that is, orders it by conjugating and harmonising its dispersed parts. And while we are on the subject of the Pythagoreans (whose heritage Guénon affirms passed into medieval Freemasonry through the Roman Collegia Fabrorum), we should also mention the Pythagoreans (whose heritage Guénon affirms passed into medieval Masonry through the Roman Collegia Fabrorum),

We must say that for them the geometrical God was the hyperborean Apollo himself, the God of primordial Light, whom Plato says "always geometrises", for with his luminous rays he "measures" the totality of universal manifestation, extracting the cosmos from chaos.

In this sense, Guénon tells us in the third chapter of *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, entitled "Measurement and Manifestation", that these rays are equivalent to the middoth of the Kabbalah (which means precisely "measures" in Hebrew), assimilated to the divine attributes and names, "affirming that God created the worlds thanks to them, which on the other hand is precisely related to the symbolism of the central point and the directions of space. We could also recall in this respect the biblical phrase in which it is stated that God has 'arranged all things in number, weight and measure'.¹⁵ According to this the corporeal manifestation, or the physical world, must be taken as a symbol of the whole universal manifestation, for otherwise it (the universal manifestation) would cease to be representable, that is to say, it could not be symbolised at all, which is evidently impossible, for the law of analogy and correspondence (the law which is the key to the symbol) acts on all levels and planes of manifestation, relating them to one another, thus generating the discourse of existence. Human thought itself is analogical, and it is precisely this quality that enables it to access and understand, at its corresponding level, the higher realities.

It is therefore that physical space is taken as a symbol of the cosmic order itself, and that space is realised and measured in its full extent by the six directions, symbolically equivalent to the middoth or divine attributes and the "luminous rays" of the Hyperborean Apollo, all starting from a centre, which in the case of the geometrical representation is a point, and in the spiritual world is the "Heart or Centre of the World", i.e. God Himself or the primordial Unity. The Lodge, which is, we repeat, an image of the cosmos, is not "actualised" until the moment when the "lights are turned on", which, in effect, make it pass from "darkness into light". All this is very important in Masonic symbolism, to which, as we are trying to explain here, Guénon has restored its authentic initiatory and esoteric dimension. He himself tells us in a chapter of *The Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*, specifically in "The Solstitial Symbolism of Janus", that the structure of the Lodge is formed from the cross of three dimensions, dimensions whose "length is 'from East to West'; its width, 'from Noon to Septentrion'; its height, 'from Earth to Heaven' (the Zenith); and its depth, 'from the surface to the centre of the Earth' (the Nadir). On the other hand, Guénon continues, it is said that 'in the Lodge of St John (as the Masonic Lodge is called) temples are raised to virtue and dungeons are dug for vice';¹⁶ these two ideas of 'raising' and 'digging' refer to the two vertical dimensions, height and depth, which are counted according to the halves of the same axis running from 'zenith to nadir', taken in mutually inverse directions; these two opposite directions correspond respectively to sattwa and tamas (while the expansion of the two horizontal dimensions corresponds to rajas), i.e. to the two tendencies of being, towards the Heavens (the temple) and towards the Hells (the dungeon)". As stated in the Masonic instruction manuals (whose reading and meditation Guénon recommended to practice assiduously as a support to the inner work), these dimensions prove that Freemasonry is universal, and therefore also the Lodge, which by being "illuminated" by the light that is within it (light awakened and conveyed by the rite), has been "opened" to spiritual influences, being constituted according to the model of the cosmos. These directions, in effect, determine three symbolic spaces analogous to the three cosmic planes: the Underworld, Earth and Heaven, which in turn relate to the three initiatory degrees of apprentice, companion and master, respectively. Therefore, if, as is stated in the rituals, the Lodge is "just and perfect", it is, among other, because it reflects the balance and

universal harmony, and because the six directions of the three-dimensional cross plus its centre add up to seven, which all traditions regard as the cosmogonic number par excellence; with it creation ends and is summed up in as indicated in Genesis, and it is at the same time the number of the traditional planets, and that of the seven sephiroth of "cosmic construction" of the kabalistic Tree of Life.

The question of the qualitative sense of the directions of space Guénon addresses it many times throughout his work, but especially in *The Symbolism of the Cross*, which is a book of capital importance for anyone interested in knowing the science of geometry from the traditional and sacred point of view, and certainly for Masons really interested in the knowledge of their Order it must represent one of the fundamental texts of symbolic research, thus making up, to a great extent, for the doctrinal deficiency in which Masonry has been immersed for several centuries now.¹⁷ That phrase that was on the frontispiece at the entrance to the Platonic school: "Let no one enter here unless he is a geometrician", could perfectly well be at the entrance to the Masonic temple, for as Guénon says, the teachings taught in that school could not "be truly and effectively understood except by an 'imitation' of divine activity", which in Masonic language is equivalent to the fulfilment of the plans "traced" by the Great Architect or Great Geometrician of the Universe.

On these plans, and their effective fulfilment in being, let us see what Guénon tells us in chapter XXXI of *Aperçus*...entitled "On the Initiatic Teaching": "Basically, if every initiatory process presents in its different phases a correspondence, whether with the individual human life or with the whole of the vital manifestation itself, whether particular or general, 'microcosmic' or 'macrocosmic', it is carried out according to a plan analogous to that which the initiate must fulfil in himself, in order to realise himself in the complete expansion of all the powers of his being. It is always and everywhere a question of the plans corresponding to one and the same synthetic conception, so that they are in principle identical, and, although they are different and indefinitely varied in their realisation, they proceed from a single 'archetype', a universal plan laid out by the supreme Will which is symbolically designated as the 'Great Architect of the Universe'.

"Thus every being tends, consciously or not, to realise in himself, by the means appropriate to his particular nature, that which Western initiatory forms, relying on 'constructive' symbolism, call the 'plan of the Great Architect of the Universe', and thus to contribute, according to the function which belongs to him in the cosmic whole, to the total realisation of this same plan, which is in short nothing else than the universalisation of his own personal realisation. It is at this point in his development, when a being really becomes aware of this finality, that the actual initiation begins for him, which must lead him by degrees, and according to his personal path, to this integral realisation, which is accomplished, not in the isolated development of certain special faculties, but in the complete, harmonious and hierarchical development all the possibilities implied in the essence of this being".

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These brief indications about the Masonic rite and the Masonic Lodge we would like to think that they have at least served to give us an idea of why Guénon considered Freemasonry as an initiatory organisation that continues to preserve the symbolic elements necessary to transmit a spiritual influence, whose development within the being leads to the knowledge of the

cosmogony and of himself as integrated within it, and from there to reach the unconditioned state of metaphysical Unity, which as such is "beyond" (so to speak) the cosmic and individual domain.

But up to now we have scarcely spoken of its initiatory structure according to the teachings transmitted to us in this respect in the Guenonian work. For Guénon, as he repeated many times, Freemasonry proper is that of the first three degrees: apprentice, companion and master, which are those directly related to the initiation of the craft. The effective realisation of these degrees (of the teachings they contain) lead to the fulfilment of the "little mysteries", which are the mysteries of cosmogony and of man, and whose knowledge is fully actualised in the master degree "since the complete realisation of the latter implies the restoration of the primordial state", to which precisely the "little mysteries" lead.¹⁸

With regard to the so-called "high degrees", Guénon distinguishes "on the one hand, those degrees which have a direct link with Freemasonry, and, on the other hand, those degrees which can be considered as representing vestiges or memories, come to be grafted onto Freemasonry, or to 'crystallise' in some way around it, of ancient initiatory organisations other than Freemasonry". These initiatory organisations to which Guénon refers are especially the Order of the Temple and the Hermetic-Christian Order of the Rosicrucian Cross, part of whose symbolic heritage has indeed "crystallised" in several high Masonic degrees, especially in those belonging to Scottish Freemasonry. With regard to these high degrees, Guénon points out that "there would be much to say about this 'conservative' role of Freemasonry, and about the possibility that this role gives it to make up to some extent for the absence of initiations of another order in the Western world today". This is very important for several reasons, not least because it completely disavows and denies any real value to those pseudo-initiative organisations that today call themselves Templar or Rosicrucian. But above all because this conservative and receptive function makes it a kind of "ark" which has concentrated in its bosom the traditional heritage of the West. This has been possible, among other things, because Freemasonry does not have a religious form which could derive by degradation into an exclusionary dogmatism, but being an initiatory organisation, it is therefore open to all traditional doctrines of an equally initiatory nature which have come or could come into contact with it. In the times we are living in, where many signs herald the end of a cycle, this conservative role of the Masonic Order is undoubtedly important and transcendental.¹⁹

It is therefore in present-day Freemasonry, and in some of its higher degrees in particular, that what could be preserved of the Order of the Temple and the Rosicrucian Order has been deposited. That these have disappeared as initiatory forms does not mean that their spirit has not remained in some latent and germinal state, and if so, it is in Freemasonry that it can be found. This is, of course, a very interesting subject, but one which, logically, we cannot develop at this time. We refer, however, to several studies that Guénon wrote entirely, or in part, on the subject, namely: "The High Masonic Degrees", "Lost Word and Substituted Names" and "Heredom", all included in volume II of *Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie et le Compagnonnage*; in *Initiation et Réalisation Spirituelle*, see the chapter entitled "Descending and Ascending Realisation"; in *Aperçus sur L'Initiation*, that entitled "On Two Initiatory Currencies"; in *Fundamental Symbols*..., "The Exit from the Cosmic Cavern"; as well as some chapters of Dante's *Esotericism*.

Among the High Degrees which, as Guénon says, have a direct link with Craft Masonry, he was particularly interested in the Royal Arch, belonging to the English Rite of Emulation.²⁰ Of this degree he tells us that "it is like the nec plus ultra of Masonic initiation... the only one to be taken as strictly Masonic properly speaking, and where the operative origin offers no doubt: it is, in any case, the normal complement to the Master's degree, with an open perspective on the 'great mysteries'", i.e. on the supra-cosmic and the metaphysical. Hence, as Guénon mentions in The Great Triad (another of his works in which numerous references are made to Masonic and also hermetic-alchemical symbolism, in correspondence with Far Eastern cosmogony), a distinction is made in Anglo-Saxon Freemasonry between what is called "Square Masonry" and "Arch Masonry". The square and the bow are obviously related to the geometrical figures of the square and the circle, and both are the respective symbols of Earth and Heaven, represented in Freemasonry precisely by the square and the compass, perhaps its two most characteristic emblems.

The square and the compass refer to the mysteries of cosmogony, which are the mysteries of Earth and Heaven, and also of man as a synthesis born of the union between the two. But in Masonic symbolism, the square, which is used to trace rectilinear figures, and therefore linked to the terrestrial, is related to the first three degrees (those that make up Square Masonry), while the compass, which is used to trace circular figures, and therefore linked to the celestial, is more related to Arch Masonry, and in the degrees of other Masonic Rites in some way similar to it. The square is directly linked with the construction and work of cosmogony, in which the perpendicular (or plumb line) and the level are also involved. It is for this reason that the badge of the Worshipful Worshipful of a Lodge (called in the ancient rituals the "Master of the Lodge", because he is the representative of that degree both in a Lodge working in the degree of Apprentice and Fellow) is a square, which is the union precisely of the perpendicular and the level, that is, of the vertical and the horizontal, whose interaction permanently generates universal life. The compass, however, is rather connected with the "completion" and "perfection" of such work, a perfection which is of course already implicit in the master degree, but which acquires its full development in the complementary Royal Arch degree. In this sense, and as Guénon says, "if the Master's degree were more explicit, and also if all those who are admitted were truly qualified, it is within it that these developments should find their place, without the need for other degrees nominally distinct from it". That these other degrees are necessary today to fulfil all the initiatory teaching contained in the Master's degree, in no way diminishes the symbolic significance of what this degree at bottom represents, which is, as we have said before, the restoration of the primordial state, or of the "true man" as it is called in Taoism, which is but the reflection of the "transcendent man", that is, of the Great Architect of the Universe Himself. Let us bear in mind that the restoration of this state is at the same time the recovery of the "lost Word", which is the aim of all Masonic work, and that this recovery is nothing other than the restoration of communication with the "Supreme Centre" or the primordial Tradition, "for this Tradition is but one with the knowledge itself which is involved in the possession of this state".²¹ Perhaps all this can be seen more clearly if we translate it into constructive symbolism, which is the model from which Masonic initiation draws the essentials of its teaching. And to do this we can do no better than to turn to those articles in The Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science which have been collected under the general heading of "Constructive Symbolism", and of those articles specifically those entitled "The Symbolism of the Dome" and "The Cornerstone", since they point out certain symbolic aspects of the Royal Arch ritual.

Indeed, it is at the level of master, which in constructive symbolism corresponds to the foundation stone situated in the very centre of the quadrangular plane of the temple (the quadrangle symbolising the Earth), that the passage from the "square to the compass" takes place, or from the "square to the circle", i.e. from Earth to Heaven, which is represented by the hemispherical dome,²² logically located at the top of the building, at the top of which is the "", on which the cornerstone is placed. The cornerstone, due to its shape, does not find its place in the temple until the construction itself is completed, which the cornerstone literally "crowns" by standing at its apex or highest point, i.e. at its zenith. The cornerstone is, as Guénon says, the symbol of the metaphysical Unity, on which the whole construction depends and of which it is but a reflection, as is the universal manifestation of the unmanifested Principle itself. From this keystone an invisible axis or pillar leads to the very centre of the temple, where the foundation stone (corresponding to the altar in Christian symbolism) is located, which appears, in effect, as the reflection of the summit stone, projecting itself in turn on the four stones situated at each of the corners of the base, which "support" and on which the whole construction rests. The whole construction is built around this axis, which is truly the symbol of the Axis of the World, and it is this axis that makes it possible for the passage or "exaltation" (this is exactly what the ceremony of admission to the rank of Royal Arch is called) to take place once the centre or altar has been reached, leading to the keystone, which, as its name suggests, is a "key" or "keystone" that opens the "narrow door" through which the final exit from the cosmic construction takes place, to the supra-individual and metaphysical states, and with them to the Supreme Identity and Liberation, the goal, if I may say so, of the whole initiatory process.

NOTES

1

It is the Sanâtana Dharma of the Hindu tradition, equivalent to the "Eternal Gospel". The words of Christ could be applied to it: "Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away".

2

Aperçus sur L'Initiation, chap. XXIX, "Operative and speculative".

3

Ibid. Guénon also provides other data which undoubtedly contribute to understanding the reasons for the birth of speculative Freemasonry, such as the fact that the members (Anderson at the head) of the four English lodges which in 1717 founded the Grand Lodge of England, had not "received the full 'operative' degrees, which explains the existence, at the beginning of 'modern' Freemasonry, of certain gaps that had to be filled later, which could only be done by the intervention of the survivors of 'ancient' Freemasonry, still much more numerous in the 18th century than historians generally believe". Elsewhere ("Heredom", in Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie et le Compagnonnage t. II) Guénon points out that these Masons had only attained the degree of Companion, and were deprived of a full knowledge of Masonic initiation, only granted by access to the Master's degree. They lacked, , the necessary legitimacy to adapt Masonic rituals to the new cyclical conditions that were taking place at the time, an adaptation that

This could only be done by respecting the ancient customs and practices, not by forgetting them, or at any rate by manipulating them in favour of a conception of Freemasonry that was more moral and committed to the external events of the profane world than truly initiatory and traditional. Guénon also notes how Anderson systematically destroyed all the documents of ancient Freemasonry that fell into his hands, especially those in which the Masonic affiliation to Christian-Hermetic esotericism was evident, in which the symbolism of the Holy Trinity was extremely important, which obviously did not fit in with the mentality of a Protestant pastor like Anderson (see in this respect "On the Corporate Signs", *ibid.*). For this very reason, the "gaps" of which Guénon speaks were mainly in the higher degrees of operative Freemasonry, including the Master's degree, which was naturally absent among those who founded the Grand Lodge of England. And it was these degrees that had to be restored, far as possible, by the "survivors" who remained faithful to their traditional heritage.

4

Tradition and transmission both come from the Latin *tradere*, which means exactly the same thing.

5

In Freemasonry, by its very constitution inherited from a tradition of crafts and trades, collective work plays a fundamental role as a support for the realisation of Knowledge. In this sense, and to know what Guénon thought in this respect, we recommend the study of chapters X and XXIII of *Initiation et Réalisation Spirituelle*, called respectively "On the 'glorification of work' " and "Collective initiatory work and spiritual 'presence'" (the latter has been translated in *SYMBOLOS* no. 7). These give all the relevant indications as to the true nature of the spiritual influence which inspires and guides the collective work as it is, or should be, practised in Freemasonry.

6

Aperçus..., chap. XVII.

7

"Initiatory Rites" and "The Rite and the Symbol", *Ibid.*

8

This is one of the reasons why regular attendance at Lodge is one of the principal duties of a Mason.

9

See "Maçons et charpentiers", in *Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie et le Compagnonnage* II. In the same volume, in the article "A propos du Grand Architecte de L'Univers", Guénon also assimilates the Great Architect with the Adam Kadmon of the Kabbalah and the Universal Man of Islamic Sufism. It is also very significant what he says about the hierogram of the Great Architect (formed by the Tetragram Iod, He, Vau, He, the ineffable name of God) and that of Allah, constituted by another Tetragram "whose hieroglyphic composition clearly designates the Principle of Universal Construction", adding in a note "that the four letters which form in Arabic the name of Allah are equivalent respectively to the ruler, the square, the compass and the circle, the latter being replaced by the triangle in Freemasonry of exclusively rectilinear symbolism".

10

"In your light we see the light", Psalms, 36, 10.

11

Aperçus... chap. XLVI, "On two initiatory currencies".

12

The ritual of opening the Lodge is complemented by the ritual of closing the Lodge. This is symbolised by the "extinguishing of the lights", which are thus concentrated on the primordial point from which they sprang. This double movement of expansion (opening) and concentration (closing) is analogous to the spirit and aspiration, creation and dissolution generated by the universal rhythm (rite).

13

The King of the World, chap.

14

In operative Freemasonry geometry was the "fifth" science, for it occupies the fifth place in the enumeration of the seven liberal arts. See in this connection "The Letter G and the Swastika", in Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science.

15

Number, weight and measure correspond to the Masonic pillars of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.

16

On the Hindu theory of the three gunas (tamas, rajas and sattwa) we refer to chapter V of The Symbolism of the Cross. Also chapter VIII of The Wheel, a symbolic image of the cosmos, by Federico Gonzalez.

17

In this work Guénon collects some teachings of Islamic esotericism and of the Hindu tradition concerning the metaphysics of geometry that could be of great use for an in-depth investigation of Masonic symbolism.

18

One of the most representative figures of the symbolic structure of the three initiatory degrees, of Freemasonry or of any other tradition, is that of the "triple druidic enclosure", to which Guénon devotes a study in chapter X of The Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science. There it is said that "the meaning of the four straight lines arranged in the form of a cross which link the three enclosures is immediately clear: they are channels which the teaching of the traditional doctrine is communicated from top to bottom, starting from the supreme degree which is its depository, and is distributed hierarchically to the other degrees". It is clear that these three enclosures correspond perfectly, from ad intra to ad extra, with the three Masonic Chambers of master, companion and apprentice respectively.

19

On all this, consult the work by Denys Roman René Guénon et les destins de la Franc-Maçonnerie, Ed. Les Editions de L'Oeuvre. Also, and as far as Masonic symbolism in general is concerned, consult the works Masonic Symbolism and Christian Tradition, by Jean Tourniac (Ed. Dervy-Livres), The Numbers in the Pythagorean-Masonic Tradition, by Arturo Reghini (Ed. Arché, Milano). Today, in contrast to Guénon's time, there are many authors who approach Masonic symbolism from a traditional perspective, and we believe that this is largely due to the influence of Guénon's work.

20

This degree is perhaps the one which has preserved with the greatest purity the heritage of Judeo-Christian esotericism in Freemasonry. Its full name is "Holy and Royal Arch of Jerusalem", and its symbolism revolves precisely around the Temple of Jerusalem or of Solomon, which, although present in all Masonic degrees, it is in this, and the equivalent of it in the higher degrees of other Rites, that its profound significance is revealed. This is attested to by the distinctive symbols of this degree, in which a circle appears, within which is inscribed a triangle, inside of which appears the "Triple Tau" (alluding to the three temples, which are in reality only one: Solomon's, the one rebuilt by Zerubbabel and the one "which is not made by the hands of man", i.e. Christ Himself), but arranged in such a way that the initials of Templum Hierosolimitano, the Temple of Solomon, appear.

21

"The lost word and substituted names". Hence a Lodge working in the Master's degree is called precisely the "Middle Chamber", for it is like an image of the Centre or Heart of the World.

22

The Christian temple normally has the form of a Latin cross, made up of the six faces of a cube raised above the plane of the base. Guénon says in "The Symbolism of the Dome" that this point is expressly indicated in the symbolism of the Royal Arch, and adds that "the face of the base, which naturally remains in its original position, corresponds then to the central part above which the dome rises".

RENE GUENON AND THE LIBERAL ARTS(excerpt)

JOSE MANUEL RIO

The notion of the Liberal Arts of the Middle Ages as a sum of profane knowledge is characteristic of this modern world, which, although "headless", at least visibly, cannot but observe all things in its own horizontal "image and likeness", for it can only imitate the work of creation within the ever narrower limits that literalism or the extreme of its materialism and its insufficient reason necessarily impose on it. This is also reflected in the perspectives that this point of view casts on the medieval "darkness", which it has invented because it ignores the Middle Ages,¹ which does not fit into its "progress"; A barrier which it apparently bridges by referring to the classical era, whose appreciation is in reality nothing more than the self-interested translation of Renaissance "humanism", in the part of it which is also literal and based on the evils of "classical" Greece itself, the society or parliament of the right-thinking Greeks² who murder Socrates because

taught young people to ask themselves about the nature of things and of the Universe, and therefore about Earth and Heaven, Gods and men, Truth and Beauty, in which they were included; which meant that in nature or in the realm of their love or their memory there was no longer any room for anything but the literalness of customs or the superstition of an "everyday" life and of a false "science" ³ which were nothing but the agreement of all accepted by a majority, that is to say, what was still called "democracy" in which there was room for culturalised "tyrants" (the approved veneer of "aesthetics" and "ethics"), even though they were no longer the citizens who participated in or inherited - and they were - the archaic tradition or traditions to which they owed the idea of the city and, before that, the idea of the people.

This was not so for the other part of the Renaissance, heir to the essence of the Middle Ages and the Mysteries, through Neoplatonism and Christian and Hermetic esotericism, which looked to Antiquity and even valued it all the more as synonymous with Wisdom the more ancient it was, but which soon began to hide (although it flashes a moment that also reaches today through the nature of art) in the face of the onslaught of the modern world, which is born of the partial and distorted literalisation of symbols and symbolic expressions (alchemy, astrology, mathematics, geometry, architecture, "philosophy") which for others were supports for meditation, as models of the world, i.e. works of art, as well as the profanation of sciences which had no other purpose than the sacred.

The possession of things at the expense of another or others can only occur when the literalness of vision is confused with reality itself, and the evil of literalness is nothing other than materialism to the extreme, when in the field of desire there is no other space than the sensible as purely exterior and not as symbol.

The idea of Thought as Knowledge is then something strange and even suspicious or laughable, because man and machines are the same and can only be produced and produce things outside themselves. Every work of art is profaned because it is now only a limited gesture that obeys a time that is called "historical" and the space of an opinion, as relative from this annihilating perspective as the subject or human being that produced it, whose origin, however, even if only by distance, is confused through countless generations with the origin of time itself.

And the sacred science of Astrology, becomes the skateboard of egos, supposedly based on the consumable astrological "aspects" (which is another way of how to do not to be) or on the assumption of the Zodiac, "Wheel of Life" and "framework" of the Cosmos, ⁴ which is anything but a peripheral continuum, and which has no relation to the slightest uniformity.

Cosmology is to be found in ontology and ontology in metaphysics, because Unity is not only the unity of parts, but because whatever it is in itself is of a universal order and no separation could be established in the transcendent, which is what man realises as formator, as subject and object, actor and acted upon, of the "Empire of the Demiurge", and of the forming Demiurge, "artisan or worker of the Universe constituted by the collectivity individual beings", ⁵ for we are not dealing here with the Nous Demiurge, who is to be related to Buddhi, the transcendent intellect of the Hindu tradition, which reveals itself in the heart or centre of every being and thus links it through indefinite states with its unmanifested origin.

Cosmogony is in the myth; the myth as a vertical inheritance for man, of a Word that brings the Memory to life, which the Art entails and in which it certainly consists, for its economy cannot contemplate productions that are outside the synthesis, that is to say that they would have any other meaning than that of an axial revelation of a transcendent reality.

And so any art, or the ensemble of arts which are nothing but forms or determinations of Art, are in principle nothing but the expression of realities of another order which is their true, profound and original meaning; That is why they can be means⁶ to rise from the sensible to the unmanifested and thus constitute in them and through their relationship, the image or expression of a scale, each one of whose degrees would be in an ascending sense a degree of universalisation and in a descending sense a degree of manifestation or concretion of unmanifested realities until reaching the sphere of the determined and central reality of the individualised with historical time and geographical space, by dressing themselves in appropriate forms to establish the permanent link with the inner sense or spiritual sap of the axial Tree, which does not prevent them from also existing and manifesting a cultural space even if they are not understood or contemplated in the light of a transcendent sense, or by each and every one or in their full depth; but still, being what they are, they generate an order or a space that makes life possible because it is a translation of the meaning of the world and therefore the possibility of a human realm, which is only degraded by the literal confusion of the symbol with the symbolised, of the "letter" with the "spirit", and the subsequent and consequent dissolution.

* * *

At the beginning of the study "René Guénon and the Liberal Arts" we are struck by a fear: how can we account for the immense synthesis which unfolds in his writings and which has to do directly and indirectly with the content of these Arts and which is nothing less than Cosmogony as a symbol of Metaphysics, expressed in each of them as a synthesis of universal Reality and as a whole as a mandala of the same? However, it is the symbol that is in charge of veiling and revealing, of transmitting and concealing the Perennial Cosmogony and the contents deposited in the soul, which need to be communicated, participated in, lived, in order to concur to the integral sum of the Word, as part of a ritual gesture that is integrated in the direction of the fulfilment of the dharma, individual, collective, group, archetypal, universal.

For medieval man, which we also are, the arts and crafts constitute the legacy of the Gods or the inspiration of the Muses, their teaching, capable of making them men, or true human beings, by their understanding. For the Gods have retired to their eternal abodes and have left us the field of action, the courtyard of their house or the atrium of their temple for us to approach them, incorporating the art of realisation, the promised and immanent transmutation in their works, which remain as an example and are alive and waiting for man to embrace them in order to transform his relative subject into an archetypal subject, beyond the dualities that black and white symbolise,⁷ in a conjunction of opposites that is the permanent present of the world whether is manifested or unmanifested, affirmed or denied, in potency or in act, with respect to an archetypal Cosmos that is the image of the Deity, its prodigal son, lost and recovered, in the great feast of joy, in which time is for the first time.

This place of the present, of the integral transformation of time into space, is the peak of the axial or polar mountain,⁸ around which the revolutions of the sensible world take place, the linear and even cyclical time, from which the one who begins the journey to knowledge must start in order to, with the guidance of the

Tradition, which in Dante's case is represented by Virgil, his summit, or centre of the world, the place proper to his human nature, stripping himself of what he has acquired through profane knowledge, which is nothing other than the degradation of traditional knowledge.

The sciences of Numbers and Letters are one in both Hebrew Kabbalah and Islamic esotericism,⁹ but in the liberal arts they are considered as two, arithmetic and grammar - although the correspondence is not exact because of the characteristics of Western languages. Ruled by the day and night luminaries, the Sun and the Moon, which in the Kabbalah's Tree of Life are hierarchised in the "Middle Pillar", as symbols of informal and formal or reflex knowledge.

The model of the planetary heavens is perfectly analogous, one could say that it is essentially the same, both for the Neoplatonic tradition - which refers to the "theory" ¹⁰ of Ideas, heir also to that of the Numbers of Pythagoreanism, and also for the Hebrew and Islamic traditions (in which only a few correspondences concerning the prophets presiding over the successive "Heavens" differ), both of which are otherwise very similar since they have a common Abrahamic origin,¹¹ as well as analogous to that of the Hindu tradition, although the latter expresses it in a different way. This does not mean that one has taken from the other the elements that constitute this symbolic model, but that, Guénon tells us, the truth is one and known to all peoples without exception, which leads us to the idea of a Primordial or Unanimous Tradition as the true origin of the traditional forms. All the more so since a Tradition is also a language, an adaptation of a "Thought", the latter also remaining expressed within itself through names, figures, mythical references and primordial symbols, which also includes geometry, prototype of the letter and body of the number.¹²

Thus the Primordial Tradition has a "solar" language, whose own place of manifestation is a "solar Earth": the terrestrial pole as a reflection of the celestial one. The language of a primordial humanity on an earth on which the sun is symbolically "immobile" or where its "revolutions" are not lost sight of, because the cyclical and linear determination of its fragments has not begun with successive time.

This language was also sung, and so it is said that Adam spoke in verse in Paradise¹³ -Pardes = Garden and also Paradêsha = supreme region-, the point of conjunction of "Earth" with "Heaven", which relates it to music, which is the science of number and proportions, the expression of the harmony of the celestial spheres, and with geometry because it refers to the central place, from which the "extension" of the earth is qualitatively measured, as is also symbolised by the four rivers that irrigate it and which flow out of paradise, joining in the Jobel, from which comes "Jubilee", absence of work or labour, a word whose value by the sum of its letters is 50 (5 x 10; and also 72 + 1). Guénon tells us that the square of a number is itself on another plane, and that to explain it we should refer to the modalities of space; for this numerical multiplication corresponds to what is geometrically and symbolically expressed by the point, the line, the plane and the volume, which in turn correspond to the planes or worlds of the Tree of Life.

This septenary, which multiplied by itself and with the sum of the unit forms the number 50, would have to do both with the synthesis of the days Creation and the symbolic architecture that the phases of time describe, and with the set of beings that constitute the septenary of the Construction.

The universal, the Cosmogony, synthesised in Adam's knowledge, in Adam himself, who knows them as possibilities of himself, for he is also the expression of the divine aspects, the 10 sephiroth of the Tree of Life in relation to the centre of the creational quaternary, $4 + 1 = 5$, so that he could give them their names, i.e. he knew their essence, by the primordial synthesis in which Adam himself, as primordial man, lives in that state.

In the Hindu tradition name and form (namâ-rupâ) characterise every manifested being, the name is its number, its characteristic essence, and its form is equivalent to the letter or sign, in correspondence with the two hemispheres of the Egg of the World, the Upper and the Lower Waters which are found in the centre.

Number is a concept of relationship which in reality symbolises the supra-individual principles, that is to say that which in the Tree of Life is the first manifestation of the sephiroth or Numerations (being the archetypes of the distinction of beings) which corresponds to the Plane of Creation (Beriyah) analogous to the Informal Manifestation, which is sometimes taken as included in the Informal Manifestation, through the regency of the Sun, and from this point of view we are considering, to the Plane of Creation (Beriyah) analogous to the Informal Manifestation, which is sometimes taken to be included in the Unmanifestation, being regarded as a direct expression of it, and not separated through the forms, (which is what characterises the individual states). That is to say that if the sensible of the symbol is the (inverted) reflection of the intelligible, the intelligible is not the "reflection" of the supra-intelligible, just as on the other hand the upper end of the soul (informal) is united with the spirit, or that the "intellect" is transposed into the spirit itself. Guénon refers in different parts of his work in these two different ways to the informal manifestation, either as part of the manifestation or as included in the unmanifestation.¹⁴

Grammar, from grammata, sign, would correspond to form as the container of essence, and indeed the Moon is properly on the Plane of Formations.

In a sense the whole trivium (grammar, logic, rhetoric) could be assimilated to the science of letters and the quadrivium (arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy) to that of numbers, counting also that astrology brings them all, as the science of cycles by the transposition of numbers, the unity and its developments, to the original or primordial time and space (mathematics, the quadrivium, the laws of the cosmos) and as the science of rhythms by the distinction and harmony of the planes of manifestation (music), i.e. to the expression of number in the cosmos governed by the intelligible light (Sun). The word, and the sound and silence that make it possible, would be the expression of the harmonies of the planetary spheres, musical harmonies also expressed in human language, which proceeds from a model of the world and recreates it, for it is the symbolic vehicle of the conceptions that gave rise to it.¹⁵

On the other hand, as letters symbolise the formal manifestation of beings,¹⁶ the "science of letters" in its broadest sense - including number - forms, in correspondence with "astrology as a cosmological science", the science of alchemy, being "in its deepest sense" one with it, expressing "both under very different appearances the very process of initiation".¹⁷

The passage from one mode of knowledge to another is a degree attained in the knowledge of Unity and in the realisation of universal Identity.

Sun and Moon also correspond in the Hindu Tradition to the two "eyes" of the "Universal Man" as macrocosm (Vaishvânara). In the Kabbalah they have their principles in the "Sun of Suns" and the "Moon of Moons", corresponding to Wisdom (Hokhmah) and Intelligence (Binah). In both cases there is also an analogy with the right eye and the left eye of the microcosm. The union of these two aspects in the human being corresponds to the recovery of the "sense of eternity" and the fullness of human possibility as regards the primordial or Adamic state, symbolised both by the opening of the âjñâ chakra and by the union in the microcosm of Hokhmah and Binah. The sahasrâra chakra (the "Thousand-petalled Lotus") is analogous to Kether (Crown) and the passage from the former state to the latter refers to the realisation of the "great mysteries".

In general, the points on the "Middle Pillar" of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life where the Sephiroth that form the columns of Grace and Rigour meet, in their correspondence in the human microcosm, correspond precisely to the situation of the chakras ("wheels") of the Hindu Tradition.¹⁸

There is only an interversion in the correspondences of the last two. The mûlâdhâra chakra, which is referred to Prakriti as the "root" (Mûla) or "foundation" of Manifestation, does not correspond to the region of the genitals as in the cabala (Yesod) but to the base of the spine. It may be noted that the difference also corresponds to the position in which the man is represented. In the first, he is a seated man in the "lotus" position, and in the second he is standing.¹⁹ In any case, the "awakening" of knowledge, symbolised by the ascent of the serpent Kundalinî, takes place symbolically in the heart, and there it is necessary to pass through the labyrinths or to accomplish the pilgrimage, linked with the alchemical transmutation, symbolised by the intestinal labyrinth and in general by the regions to which the lower chakras correspond. In order to pass through this labyrinth, the sacred scriptures are the basis of the path, for they remain as the initiate transforms, which coincides with other readings of reality, until he can "read" directly in the "Book of Life", whereas in the beginning he only "spelt", which in its fullness coincides with the completion of the "work in white" when it is said that the alchemical books can now be "burnt", while the perfection of the "work in red" refers to the "union with Him who writes in the Book of Life",²⁰ a symbolic one that can be transposed to the realisation of the "great mysteries".²¹

Thus the polar mountain is said to touch the sphere of the moon, in which case the moon is taken to signify the first heaven.²²

In the Hebrew Kabbalah the moon is the planetary correspondence of Yesod, meaning Foundation, which is identified with the permanent, creative, revealing and redeeming divine act.

In this way, the revealed texts are the foundation of Knowledge insofar as they convey the inspiration that gave rise to them, making possible and even generating the knowledge of the World or Book of Creation through the awakening in the heart of energies analogous to those that make it up.

From another point of view, the code of Manu also constitutes the ordering of a traditional society and the ordering of individual possibilities in relation to it, as an expression of the Principles and a fitting in with nature, which ensures that everyone can find the necessary degree of freedom and the ordering that supports as far as possible the possibilities of realisation that he or she carries within him or herself.

The entire tradition lived by a people is thus the prototypical discourse in which the sacred theatre is permanently recreated, and in this scenography, grammar is present "by its construction", logic or dialectics by the transparency of its meaning, rhetoric by the "order" of its ensemble, music "by the number of its parts",²³ arithmetic by the balance of its relations, geometry by its image of the world, astrology in its calendar, the whole being an image of the celestial archetype.

From another point of view, to the Plane of Formations (Yetsirah) correspond in the Tarot the Cups, noting that there are 10 cards numbered from 1 to 10, in each suit or "colour". The Graal, the symbol of the Primordial Tradition, and of its knowledge, is both a book and a cup, Gradale and Grasale, carved by the angels, or higher states (Informal Manifestation), on the "outside" of which is engraved the Tradition. That cup is the depository of the liquor of immortality (Solar), the spiritual blood of the one who unites in himself the two natures divine and human, a liquor or food which refers to the state of the True Man.

"The heavens and the earth narrate the Glory of God", says the Holy Book. Glory is the name of the sephirah Hod, to which corresponds Hermes among the Gods and Mercury among the planets, and it is well to note here that each aspect refers to a plane which constitutes its own realm. The first and highest is the plane of Atziluth, proper to the sephiroth themselves, for they are aspects or names of the "One without a second" and truly correspond to the mystery of the unmanifestation of Being, to the transcendent Unity. The higher states of being, as informal manifestation, are the intermediary Gods, corresponding to the plane of Beriyah as creative, acting and intermediary potencies, who constitute the communication between unmanifestation and manifestation. It is true in turn that there is a Tree in each sephirah, and likewise a Tree in each plane or world, corresponding to each other, for it is only formally that they appear as separate.

Dante places in the heaven of the Moon, those who had broken the vow of chastity and then repented, which can be seen as the imprint of time on memory. Also in the last circle of Purgatory, lust or concupiscence is purged or rectified, as one of the misunderstood evils of love that correspond to the three upper circles of this Mountain.²⁴ The latter translates the presence of an attachment to the formal that links to a memory of individual existence, which is rectified by the passage through the fire and later the immersion and drinking in the waters of Lethe-Eunoe, which erases the memory of the former existence, related to the effective passage beyond the "stream of forms". They are on the side of the sky, i.e. under the celestial compass, and therefore know unity, although the "opacity" of the substance is present, which has to do with an element of passivity.

In the symbolic representations of Glory the divine name (Tetragramma, origin of the four worlds) appears beyond the circles of clouds symbolising the upper waters, which open like the upper part of the Anima Mundi to let in the ray or spiritual fire. This arrangement

The hierarchical hierarchy is the symbol of the true causes and effects, if I may say so, images of the First Cause, which go from the universal to the particular and go back from the particular to the universal by tracing a scale (analogy) or better, by configuring a manifestation illuminated by its transcendent principle, which is expressed in its own hierarchy. Similarly, the traditional sciences, of which logic could be the prototype, are the applications of spiritual doctrine to the various orders of reality. The laws of the sciences, René Guénon tells us, just as the rules of the arts are applications of metaphysical principles, so are their symbols.

It also tells us that logic as a mode of writing is but a mode of expression. But transposed here to the divine Scripture as vertical it will refer to the Word which is written on the different planes of the Cosmos ("Order") and manifests its hierarchy and its analogies which constitute the universal message of Intelligence. Similarly in return the Arts and Sciences are united in the common nature of the symbol, configuring in themselves a didactics that leads to the ether as the celestial realm, which is found in the most hidden part of the cavern of the heart, inhabited in pure form, not composed, or direct, by the intellect.²⁵

Now, as analytical sciences, René Guénon tells us that among the various cosmological branches of the Hindu tradition there is the Vaishêshika, which refers to the knowledge of things in a distinctive and individual way, and therefore considers the elements and conditions of that existence, as perceived by the human senses, and from a substantial point of view, that is to say, a degree of reading of the symbol. He tells us that in order to know what these really are, this point of view must be supplemented by that of the Shankya, which is synthetic and considers the whole manifestation, comprised between Purusha and Prakriti, unmanifested and united beyond it. Purusha being "non-acting" and the one who inspires or produces by this "action" all the productions of Prakriti which constitute the universal construction, in which he appears at the same time as the last one "produced" by Prakriti, which also refers us to the article "The Word and the Symbol" ²⁶ where it speaks of the Incarnation which crowns "the Creation by which, the divine Intellect, which is the 'place of the possible', manifests and expresses itself, in relation to us"; ... "Incarnation which could be 'prefigured' by the symbolic 'incorporation' of the 'non-human' tradition, of the primordial Revelation, the work of the Word as Creation" which "is also incorporated, so to speak, in symbols which have been handed down from age to age since the origins of humanity; and this process is also analogous, in its order, to that of creation itself". Prototype then of cosmogony, both in reference to the macrocosm, to the end of the cycle and the manifestation of a "new earth and a new heaven", and to the microcosm, being also the prototype of the initiatory process, which "reproduces the cosmogonic process in all its parts.

Thus the sacred sciences have as their essential object the transmutation and incarnation of knowledge, whether for themselves or for others in the context of Creation, and are a form of the divine descent which makes manifestation a hierophany, either directly or through the intermediary of messengers who awaken and teach men by vivifying in them the timeless memory of the Origins. Those sciences, which are also an expression of the Art, project light on things in order to refer them to their doctrinal, spiritual principles. An example of what the sacred sciences are is given by Guénon in the angeology of Islamic esotericism.

The octagon is the intermediate figure between the circle which corresponds to the sky
-and the square of the earth, thus the science of analogies which establishes the correspondences between the sky and the earth and this function is

in the heavenly realm that of the eight angels who support the divine throne that surrounds the worlds (we know that angels means envoys or messengers). The names of these angels, which are made up of all the letters of the alphabet (28, the former being 22 as in Hebrew)²⁸ correspond to the cardinal and intermediate points. This is, moreover, a symbol analogous to the Rosa Mundi or Rota Mundi of the Rosicrucians,²⁹ although the latter refers rather to the "intermediate" world, the Rosa Mundi being figured by a wheel of eight spokes corresponding to the elements and to the sensible qualities, as well as being linked to the expression "rose of the winds", which also appear as messengers in the Sacred Books of both traditions. But not only that, Guénon also speaks of their correspondence with chirolgy (and also explains certain operations with the numbers corresponding to the letters arranged in the eight spokes and showing the three worlds contained in the distribution of the numerical values and all of them in unity) and from the fingers of the hand corresponding to the letters of the divine name to the correspondences with the zodiacal signs and the planets, the planetary heavens and the prophets who preside over these as well as the corresponding sciences or arts by the spiritual qualities they embody; heavens, stars and elements have their correspondence in the hand of man, both with the individual in particular and with the human being in general as a state of the universal Being. Also that the left hand refers to the characters that the human being brings with him (innate) and the right hand to the acquired ones, and more things that are found in this study that Guénon communicates to us, which, like all symbols of totality, lead us beyond particular analyses to the stillness and amazement of the intuition of the unity that surpasses the cosmos and to analogical configuration contained in the table of Hermes where it says that "as above is below and as below is above, to work the miracles of the One thing", albeit in inverted form, as manifested by the arithmetical symbol of unity, and also the relationship of the "outer" and the "inner" "always comparable, at whatever level it is placed, to that of the terrestrial world and the celestial world".³⁰ With regard to The Divine Comedy, in the heaven of Mercury Dante understands the cause of the Incarnation, passion and death of Christ, which "opened the long-desired ways".

In the heaven of Venus we note two things: one when, after receiving what she has been taught, she is told that "now she can see before her face that to which she had previously turned her back", which is truly the model of conversion, understood as identification, as entry into the sacred space that the messenger represents, in this case the goddess (Genetrix)³¹ or the expression of Art as it is transmuted or transformed into its inner content, and the other when Beatrice, in order to explain to her why things are the way they are in the world, tells her that in it people are destined for what they were not born for, which has to do with the fulfilment of the goddess's destiny, in order to explain to him why things in the world are like this, tells him that people are destined for what they were not born for, which has to do with the fulfilment of dharma (swadharma as it refers to the individual nature),³² by which the being should reach the centre of the septenary, He gives as an example "the sword and the mitre", the prototype or first differentiation of functions or of a power unique in its essence, which corresponds to the state before the differentiation of the castes and which is identified with the primordial state; and thus referring to the temporal and the spiritual, the union of which, on the other hand, is at every level the "victory" for the being, which thus passes into other possibilities of itself.³³ "Victory" is indeed the name of the sefirah Netzah, to which Venus corresponds.

Referring to the production of numbers, which proceed by distinction and therefore by the addition of the necessary unity to the previous ones, Guénon tells us that after the Senary which corresponds to Creation, the Septenary is produced by considering things different from us, which "in this very measure become external, and at the same time become distinct from each other;

then appear as clothed in forms", generating Formation as an immediate consequence of Creation.

Guénon also tells us that in the fulfilment of the dharma "virtue" has no other meaning than the fulfilment of what is in conformity with one's own nature.³⁴ Moreover, this is what most resembles in essence "non-action" and thus identification with the model in which the Order is contemplated and thus with the Rite of Art.

In the same way, in the collectivity of the traditional society as a whole, the fulfilment by everyone of his "office" makes of it a sacred play, which manifests it, in the sense that it reveals it. This carries an implicit didactic, referring to the action of the Gods. So the life of a traditional people, within the framework of heaven and earth, is the greatest mandala a man can access, since it is a living mandala, and in a certain sense there is no other mandala in the conditions of the sensible world, since the symbolic vehicles are only the intermediary to access the permanent Mandala of Life, in which things attract each other, conjugate and separate, and also speak of the celestial and manifest it.

NOTES

1

See for example Regine Pernoud, *A la luz de la Edad Media*, Granica, Barcelona 1983 and *Pour en finir avec le Moyen Age*, Ed. du Seuil, Paris.

2

Who are the "Greeks"?

3

See chaps. I, II and III of *East and West: "Civilisation and Progress", "The Superstition of Science", "The Superstition of Life"*.

4

See, among others, *"Frames and Labyrinths", "The Zodiac and the Cardinal Points"* and *"The Solstitial Gates"*, chaps. LXVI, XIII and XXXV of *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*.

5

See René Guénon, *"A propos du grand Architecte de l'Univers"* in *Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie et le Compagnonnage*, T. II and *"The Demiurge"* (*Mélanges*), published in No. 8 of the magazine *SYMBOLOS* (Guatemala 1994).

6

Cf. *Mélanges: "Les Arts et leur conception traditionnelle"*.

7

See *"Black and White"*, Chapter XLVII of *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*.

8

Man, mountain and tree are analogous as symbolic expressions of the Axis.

9

See On Islamic Esotericism and Taoism, Chapter VI.

10

From theorein: to contemplate.

11

Both also indicate their Western origin by their name: ereb and eber designate the West, and come like the others from the end of the cycle of the union of a current coming from the Primordial Tradition with one coming from the Atlantean Tradition, in analogy with the quadrant of cyclic time corresponding to the Kali-Yuga, whose origin is represented in the Hindu Tradition as the most direct heir of the Primordial Tradition. Cf. René Guénon: Traditional Forms and Cosmic Cycles, chapter "Place of the Atlantean Tradition in the Manvantara".

12

Everything is in the letter of the symbol, in the letter of the sacred languages, there nothing to add to it; and all languages participate directly or indirectly in the sacred character; they come from some code and must have something to do with that which they designate; for they were the vehicle of ideas and even remotely participate in their origin, without removing the direct or indirect intervention of the representatives of Tradition as one of its adaptations, destined to generate or vivify the forgotten memory; and thus the work of Dante and the "vulgar" language, Provençal poetry which is clothed in symbols and is heir to the bards and travellers linking East and West, the work of Rabelais; the poetry and the "covered language" of the "Faithful of Love" and of Freemasonry, the writings susceptible of other readings because they refer to them in the apparently profane language of supposedly everyday life; the traditional links and concepts present as inheritance or insert of the unanimous thought and symbol, ever present; the inspired language, leading to another time or state; all is by itself, which does not detract from their differences, or their distinction. Fused and not confused, the principle of any manifestation is not the manifestation itself. It is in non-duality, which is beyond determination - that of specific origin - that the identity of anything and of all things is to be found, for it surpasses the necessity of order, which is but the distinctive stamp of Being, the trace or intelligible imprint of a Unity which is not superimposed upon things, but constitutes another degree of , of their whole and of any one of them, inseparable from their name and their reality, which in It is when they truly are. There is Word but the Word, "by Whom all things were made".

13

This relates it, Guénon tells us, to the "angelic" and solar revelation that takes place at the centre of the human state. He also tells us that the "angels", which correspond in theology to what in metaphysics are the higher states of being, are symbolised by birds and that the understanding of their song symbolises higher knowledge. The song of birds characterises designs that trace in the present, generating forms and spaces, which is proper to the sciences of time, such as dance, song,

music, which always refer to the perception of, and in, simultaneity. The sciences of rhythm are ultimately a matching of the correspondences between the different planes of reality, to which they link.

14

See in this respect "Spirit and Intellect", in *Mélanges*. Gallimard, Paris. It may also be remembered that on each plane or world of the Sephirothic Tree, there is in turn a Tree, and that the Malkuth of "Atziluth" is in turn the Kether of "Beriyah".

15

René Guénon tells us that to really know what a sacred language is, one has to live in the environment where it is spoken on a daily basis.

16

Cf. the *Sefer Yetsirah* (Ed. Obelisco, Barcelona).

17

See "The Science of Letters", Chapter VI of *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*, and "The Language of Birds", Chapter VII.

18

See "Kundalini Yoga", chap. of *Etudes sur l'Hindouisme*.

19

This also perhaps explains to us something of both traditions: on the one hand, from the Hindu point of view, man already lives in a sacred land, and this has to do with the heritage of the Hindu tradition, direct from the primordial tradition, the World is already sacred and meaningful. The Hebrew people consider themselves to be in exile and must access the sacred place where they are verticalised, where the ladder to higher states opens up, as exemplified in the story of Jacob (it is also said that this stone - linked to the Lûz of immortality - was later the foundation stone of the Temple). These are also two perspectives that can coexist and that link with the idea of pilgrimage. Guénon tells us that the pilgrimage to symbolic centres is not only something to do with the earth, but with the projection of certain stars, as is evident in the pilgrimage to Compostela. In other words, it is not only happening on Earth but is happening in the Heavens, understood as the upper part of the intermediary world. For the Hindu Tradition, as for the Hebrew and others, there are seven "earths" (in the former, "islands" or "continents"), and although one is sensibly manifested, the other six co-exist, in the subtle world. As the pilgrimage to the centre also has to do with the "passage" through the intermediary world - and Santiago is related to the sciences of cosmogony and the intermediary sciences - the access to the Centre implies an analogous journey through those worlds or readings of the world that are symbolised by the different earths on the subtle plane. They are related to the Mèru, the polar mountain, which has six faces (obviously linked to the directions of space) and a seventh, if one can say so, corresponding to its own vertex. In any case, the mountain belongs to the Earth, and its ascent, like that of the Mount of Purgatory by Dante, is an alchemical purification, or rather a conjunction, as we have already seen after the exit from Hell (*inferiora or interiora terrae*) of the four stars, which is accomplished with the help of Tradition, personified in Virgil.

20

In Masonic symbolism, the Master is one who "is able not only to 'read' but also to write the 'Book of Life', that is, to co-operate consciously in the realisation of the Plan of the 'Great Architect of the Universe'" (Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science, Ch. VI: "The Science of Letters").

21

See The Great Triad, Ch. XVIII: "True Man and Transcendent Man".

22

See Man and his Becoming according to the Vedanta, Ch. XXI: "The 'divine journey' of the being on the way to liberation". The "sphere of the moon" is precisely the "medium where forms are elaborated", i.e. it is through it that the informal plane can be accessed, it is in this sense that it is "Janua Caeli" and "Janua Inferni", Diana and Hecate, in the former it gives entrance to another stage, in the latter the being returns to the individual manifestation.

23

See Dante's Esotericism, Ch. I: "Apparent meaning and hidden meaning".

24

Which is said to have been "formed by the earth being thrown out of the hole (Hell = states lower than the properly human) caused by Lucifer in his fall".

25

See "The Ether in the Heart", Chapter LXXIV of Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science.

26

"The Word and the Symbol", Chapter II of Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science.

27

Beyond the will of the one who supposes , reality is immediate and happens in spite of himself, and in any case it is the recognition of his own ignorance and of the limits of his individual knowledge that generates a void (yin) from which knowledge, or the "way", is possible and therefore already acting. Thus, multiplicity is suspended in another dimension of time that absorbs space by regenerating it and in that beginning of effective contemplation, in which it is itself a symbol, before a virginity of all forms (form characterises every individual state by the determination of a "direction", even if it is not of those subject to the condition of space) geometry and music are born and the beginning of Astrology or what their expressions symbolise. The former are sciences of number, and geometry could be linked to vision and music to hearing, were it not for the fact that both are interpenetrating, as manifestations of the numerals that generate their models and inhabit the timeless, (which corresponds to informal or non-formal manifestation), coeval with the present and distinct from the sum of their productions that can no longer be presupposed, let alone observed as allegory. The supra-individual states of being are properly the Gods or the celestial manifestations of the supreme Unity, the "One without a second", the "Great Unity" which is beyond Heaven and is identified with the "Tao without name", which together with manifestation have not only "created" but also create man, for the domain of the "One without a second", the "One without a second", the "Great Unity" which is beyond Heaven and is identified with the "Tao without a name", which together with manifestation has not only "created" but creates man, for the

of Creation or Poiesis is itself that of the timeless as an image of the eternal, and that timelessness includes the temporal and the historical, for in it is included the subtle and the gross, i.e. the lower soul and the corporeal that constitute individuality. This gives us the different planes of reading that correspond both to the determination of the worlds with respect to the human individuality that faces the "return" to the Principle, and the states of being that correspond to that knowledge (or levels of knowledge in so far as this is identity), all relative to the supreme knowledge, but nevertheless constituting prototypical and analogous phases of the creation of the worlds, and implying a hierarchy which is that of the Axis itself as the principle of the indefinite states of existence on the part of each of its points, which are reflected in the modalities of any given state, an unclosed cycle whose representation is linked with the spiral and thus with the scale on which the other states of being (higher and lower in relation to it) are reflected.

28

According to the Sefer Yetsirah (the "Book of Formation" of the Kabbalistic tradition) the 22 letters are divided into 3 "mother" letters, 7 "double" letters and 12 "single" letters.

It also corresponds to the number of years that Pythagoras is said to have travelled, among other places in Egypt; it is also the number of the Major Arcana of the Tarot. Regarding its presence in The Divine Comedy and after collecting some correspondences pointed out in a commentary by R. Benini, numerical, geometrical and astronomical, Guénon says that it seems to him the most important thing that it is derived from 11 (number formed by the sum of 5 and 6, which correspond to "the central union of Heaven and Earth"). See "Celestial Numbers and Terrestrial Numbers" Ch. VIII of The Great Triad, and "The Symbolic Numbers", Ch. VII of Dante's Esotericism.

29

See "The Octagon", Chapter XLII of Fundamental Symbols.

30

Ibid.

31

The Balance can also be seen as a symbol of the balance of the six directions of space in the centre, an image of the celestial or supreme Centre. The zodiacal Balance, which refers to time, and the equinox, was formerly polar, in another cyclic phase or qualitative state of the human and cosmic world. Also the Adityas (archetypes of the zodiacal signs) were formerly 7, and their chief was Varuna (identical to Ouranos -Heaven).

32

Dharma and dhruva (pole) have the same root, which refers to the idea of stability, and is linked to the substantial aspect, the Earth as principle, hylé or raw material.

33

"Sciences" and "virtues" are joined at each level on the invisible axis of the Double Scale of Kadosh, 30th degree of Scottish Freemasonry. See Dante's Esotericism, Chapter II: "The Holy Faith". This scale is of two degrees. This degree is "nec plus ultra" in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, as the end of the ascending realisation, the following degrees, up to 33, refer to the "descending" realisation.

It is also worth remembering that "every metal that has reached its own perfection is gold".

FREEMASONRY ALIVE

FERNANDO TREJOS

We have no doubt that in the West, Freemasonry has been the most direct and true repository of the rites, symbols and mysteries of the Hermetic tradition, and thus constitutes an authentic living branch of the primordial tradition.

The origins and historical development of this issue of SYMBOLOS (No. 13-14 'Freemasonry', Guatemala 1997) demonstrate a clear link between the Masonic order and the various traditional forms that have shaped the foundations and the most essential aspects of Western culture.

It is true that most of the Masonic lodges and obediences that have multiplied throughout the world since the 18th century have since been influenced by various currents of the modern world which have diverted them from their primary objective - the unceasing search for Unity, i.e. Truth - and from their fundamental task: the construction of a universal temple based on archetypal ideas inherited from the unanimous tradition and the deposit and transmission of the rites and symbols that constitute the necessary supports for the members of the Order to be able to effect a true initiation or transmutation that allows them to identify with those universal ideas that always converge in an inner Centre of which the Order is a living reflection. But it is also true that in these centuries of "growing obscurity", some Masons have managed to maintain some Masons who, having understood this high ideal and having always had to fight against modern currents - which seem to tend to sweep away everything - have nevertheless managed to preserve the true Masonic spirit and therefore to give life to those symbolic vehicles of the Royal Craft which can lead along the ineffable path of the Mysteries.

From Le Tuileur de Vuillaume, Paris 1830

The existence of lodges and obediences that do not separate themselves from the initiatory path and that understand the transcendent mission they are called upon to fulfil, is what allows us to suppose that Freemasonry is alive; that despite the many wiles of the enemy it has not succumbed; And that there is a true inner Order which will necessarily sow the foundations upon which the new world - the new man - will be built, which will rise from the ashes, defeating death and interweaving earth with heaven, that is to say, making the square and the compass interact.

The majority of Masonic lodges, especially in the West, are totally ignorant of their origin, their essence and their mission. It should be remembered that since the first modern lodges in England were organised, they have been strongly affected by rationalist - and basically materialist - ideas, which distanced them from their fundamentally initiatory origins and flooded workshops with profane ideologies and theories related to scientism, a horizontal vision of history, short-sighted illusions of evolution and progress and the

personalised and individualistic humanism. It also happened that many Brother Masons, desirous of preventing the loss of the esoteric knowledge of the Order, were unhappily attracted by currents in vogue of a theosophist, spiritualist and occultist character, which distorted the truly inner and spiritual meaning of the rites and symbols, and brought into the workshops lower psychic energies, replacing the paths leading to the Mystery with dark chaotic paths full of "forces" and "powers" as illusory as they were destructive. Because of the free and autonomous character of the Lodges, and because of the possibility for Masons to work under cover from indiscretions, without any higher "entity" to supervise the work, it has always been possible for any given Lodge, ignorant of the essential principles of the Order, to fall, as so many have fallen, into aberrations and deviations of all kinds. Thus, it has often been the case that Masonic workshops, not knowing what their function was, have engaged in profane and extra-Masonic activities of all kinds: In many cases, lodges devoted themselves to the study of the sciences, the arts or history with a rationalist vision that logically prevented them from recognising the sacred aspects of Masonic work and the spiritual, mythical and metaphysical origins of the Order to which they claimed to belong; others, many Masons, believing that the work they were supposed to do was of a humanistic and social nature, used the workshops as a political platform, as a centre of influence and profane power, as charitable institutions, and even as a kind of social club, a meeting of friends or a business centre. Not that we think it is wrong to engage in such activities, but to do so in the name of an Order - the only one in the West - whose primary function, as we have said, is to serve as a repository for traditional ideas and to transmit the cosmogonic and metaphysical knowledge that these ideas entail, has succeeded in making Freemasonry known today, in general terms, not for its transcendent function, but for activities of this kind, which have done nothing more and to discredit it, to disorder, division and confusion, and to make Masons themselves believe - often ignorant of their role - that Freemasonry is just that.

And the deviation has been of such magnitude that today the activities of real gangs have come to public light who, claiming to work in a lodge, have forged in their sacrilegious meetings all kinds of conspiracies, plots and frauds, causing enormous discredit to the Order to which these individuals never really belonged.

It is well known that especially during the last century and the first half of this one, various political movements and many presidents and rulers (almost always of liberal thought) whose ideologies and strategies were forged in a Masonic workshop emerged from the lodges. The intellectual movement that brought about the independence of America from European countries took place in a lodge; and almost all the liberators of that continent (Bolivar, San Martin, Washington, Morelos, etc., etc.) were Masons. Today some brethren believe - because they ignore other possibilities - that the type of activity to be carried out during the work of the lodge may consist of giving speeches recalling these ideologies and extolling the names and exploits of historically outstanding senior brethren in politics, the arts and the secular sciences. Others, in view of the loss of political power that lodges have suffered in recent years, have diverted the work to "cultural", social and charitable works. It is well known that in North America, for example, most lodges have become purely charitable institutions that "altruistically" fund hospitals, schools and universities.

At present, moreover, perhaps a majority of lodges find themselves, because they belong to a certain obedience (which corresponds to this or that European Orient), in an absurd division, in a sordid struggle in which some are branded as "the most important".

to others as "irregular" or "regular" according to bureaucratic parameters which go to the extremes of giving or denying entry to a brother depending on whether his lodge is listed in a particular official booklet where ancient customs and practices are conspicuous by their absence.

In these lodges there is an ignorance of what a Mason is and what the Order is.

The truth is that a lodge - however wild it may appear to be - is true if the rite is performed with perfection and conscience; if there is a regular transmission of the words and inner forces which have been handed down uninterruptedly since ancient times; if the brethren keep the true secret, inner silence; if individual matters and social or economic problems, and all matters of a profane nature, are properly kept outside the doors of the temple; if matters of an individual nature, social or economic problems and all matters of a profane nature are kept, as they should be, together with metals, outside the doors of the temple; if its members understand their mission and their function and devote themselves, as their principal task, to the study and practice of the Arts and Sciences which the Order teaches.

A lodge is true not by belonging to one or another obedience that arbitrarily proclaims itself to be official or regular, nor by having any kind of "pedigree" or patent. No. A lodge is true if the Masonic works it performs are true; if it succeeds in bringing to life the Force or Light hidden behind the symbols handed down from the origins through the rites, gestures and words that Masons practice.

And Freemasonry is alive not because of the existence of numerous lodges engaged, as we have said, in profane activities. It is so because in spite of so many vicissitudes most lodges have been able to preserve at least the most essential of the rites of initiation, increase of pay and exaltation; because the sacred words and words of passage have been preserved enabling those who consciously receive them to experience their force and to know their meaning; because the rituals of opening and closing the workings, in the various degrees, have generally remained quite intact; because the legends which are preserved in all the degrees are alive; because the legends which are preserved in all the degrees are still alive; because the lodges are still alive; because the legends preserved in all the degrees are alive; because the lodges are still decorated with the fundamental symbols of the Order and the manuals still recall the symbolic studies corresponding to each degree and the graded ascent through the worlds of grammar, logic and rhetoric; and of mathematics, geometry, music and astronomy. It is alive because in so many of the workshops there are isolated brethren with a right intention to seek which enables them to receive in various ways and in whatever degree a spiritual influence which these rites and symbols are capable of bestowing; and also because there are still some lodges in which the true Masonic spirit reigns; in which there is always a watchful guardian guarding against the entrance of unholy forces and ideas; in which the Unity of the Great Architect, the Beauty of his work, the Strength of his spirit, and his infinite Wisdom, are ceaselessly invoked from the heart. Workshops with health and joy in which fraternal union is stimulated not by individual bonds but by the highest: the common search for a unique Centre in which the essence of All resides. Workshops in which one works patiently and perseveringly, in coordination and respecting the true hierarchies in the construction of an inner building, of a living cosmogony that includes death and resurrection, that is to say transmutation, which finally makes it possible for the heart of the adept and the centre of the temple - indissolubly united - to become the true dwelling place of the divinity.

Freemasonry is alive because its innermost essence - and that of true Freemasons - is immortal; and because sooner or later the Order will have to fulfil its

mission crowning the construction of a universal temple built according to the plans designed by the Great Architect of the Universe.

The Hermetic Tradition is alive and there are still true Masons capable of understanding and reviving it.

"By their works ye shall know them".

THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM IN MASONIC SYMBOLISM FRANCISCO

ARIZA

Although today's Freemasonry derives from the various esoteric currents in the West and from adaptations of ancient operative rituals that took place during the 18th century, its real origin goes back much further in time, even beyond the medieval guilds and guilds of builders. This origin, according to Masonic documents, is to be found in the construction of the Temple of Jerusalem, also known as the Temple of Solomon, for it was this wise king, author of Proverbs, Wisdom and the Song of Songs, who ordered its construction (and probably drew up the plans for it), thus fulfilling the will of his father, King David.¹

We could say that the Temple of Solomon is at the very essence of Freemasonry, which permanently updates its spiritual content through its rites and symbols, starting with that of the Lodge itself, which has in it its model or prototype. It is also updated in its exemplary myths and legends, which contain the most significant episodes of its sacred history, as is the case of the one whose central theme is Master Hiram, to whom we will refer throughout these pages, in which we only intend to outline certain ideas on this important subject, and which could perhaps serve as a starting point for a more extensive development.

In these legends² it is related that all the Masons scattered throughout the four corners of the world gathered in Jerusalem to carry out such a great undertaking. And so it must indeed have been, judging by the multitude of workmen and craftsmen who took part in its construction. The Bible³ mentions hundreds thousands, who must have come not from a single country, but from several, since the influence of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, ruled by Solomon, extended over a very wide area of the Middle East. All these workers, divided according to their functions and grades, were under the authority of Hiram Abi (or simply Hiram), an experienced master of the art of metalworking, a fact which links him to his legendary ancestor Tubalcain, who appears in Genesis as the inventor of metallurgy, and therefore of the arts linked to fire and its power of transmutation, which must be understood in both its physical and spiritual sense.⁵

Addressing Solomon, the Tyrian king Hiram said to him: "I am now sending you Hiram Abi, a skilful man of understanding (...) He knows how to work gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, wood, scarlet purple, violet purple, fine linen and crimson. He also knows how to make all kinds of engravings and to execute any work that is proposed to him".⁶ Thus the master

Hiram appears as the heir to a very ancient tradition of craftsmanship that encompassed numerous trades or techniques, all of which were applied in the building of the Temple. In this respect, it should be added that until this construction took place, the Hebrew people had led an entirely nomadic way of life, and consequently their conception of the world responded to parameters that were appreciably different from those of sedentary peoples, who as such developed more particularly the arts linked to metallurgy and construction.⁷ In other words, Solomon necessarily had to resort to those who were perfectly familiar with geometrical laws of the Soul of the World (cosmogony), and who therefore possessed the necessary construction techniques to express them as accurately as possible.⁸ This knowledge was applied in the construction of the Temple, reproducing in its symbolic structures the different planes or levels of the cosmos, including the furnishings and decoration, for as Flavius Josephus said in his *Judaic Antiquities*: "The raison d'être of every object in the Temple is to recall and represent the cosmos".

Solomon with the plans of the Temple J.J. Scheuchzer, *Physica Sacra Iconibus Illustrata*, Augsburg 1731

If in all traditional civilisations their temples and sacred sanctuaries constitute an image of the cosmos (and of the transcendent reality), the entrance to the Temple of Jerusalem was through the Ulam or Portico, a place of transit through which one entered the Hekal or "Holy One", whose shape was entirely rectangular or "long square", symbolising the whole of the terrestrial world. The main element in the centre of the Hekal was the Altar of Perfumes, or incense, the oblation of which represented one of the most important rites performed in the Temple. Opposite this altar was the Debir or "Holy of Holies", the innermost and most sacred chamber of the Tabernacle, which is why it symbolised the heavenly world.⁹ In the centre of the Debir was deposited the "Ark of the Covenant", guarded by the statues of two winged cherubim, and inside which were kept the Tablets of the Torah (of Wisdom), living and permanent testimony to the "covenant" between God and the people of Israel.¹⁰ In reality that covenant, like the one established by any traditional civilisation, is with the ineffable and mysterious God, who reveals himself through his Name, which is his Being, Word or creative Logos, that is to say the Great Architect of the Universe.¹¹

On either side of the entrance portico, on the outside of the Temple, stood the columns called Jakin and Boaz, which surely evoked those which, according to Masonic legends, survived the flood, and on which were engraved all the sciences referring to the knowledge and traditional knowledge inherited from primordial humanity.¹² Like the Masonic Lodge (whose structure reproduces that of the Temple of Jerusalem), the Jakin and Boaz columns allude to a cosmic symbolism related to the two solstices, and closely linked to the double current of cosmic energy to which everything manifested is subject. Therefore, the explanation or symbolic meaning of the two columns "must be sought in the order of the cosmic references, in correspondence with the very ancient ritual observation of the sun throughout the year. The observer stood in the centre of the sacred place, facing east, i.e. facing the rising sun (...) He followed the progressive movements of the sunrise on the horizon, between the two extreme limits reached by the summer and winter solstices. These two essential points were marked by two posts, two menhirs in certain prehistoric alignments in Brittany or England, or by two columns in the case of more elaborate temples".¹³ The Jakin and Boaz¹⁴ columns were not simply decorative elements, but were used to establish a spatio-temporal framework indicated by the different positions of the solar star, positions that

determine the universal symbolic scheme of the quaternary cross, since the Winter and Summer solstices (corresponding to the North-South axis) also determine the location of the Spring and Autumn equinoxes (corresponding to the East-West axis).¹⁵

Another work by the master Hiram belonged to the same order of ideas. We are referring to the "Sea of Bronze", which was located in the south-east corner of the atrium, near the entrance to the Temple. In fact, like the two columns, the Sea of Bronze was part of a cosmic symbolism, since this name probably came from the fact that it was intended to represent the "Celestial Ocean" (the "Upper Waters"), since it was full of water up to its edges, and its shape was entirely round, like the sky. While it is true that, as II Chronicles 4:6 relates, the bronze Sea was used for the ablutions of the priests, this must have occurred at a time when its original significance, which was (according to research that has been done on the subject) to serve as an astronomical observatory, had been forgotten, since the flat surface of the water acted as a translucent mirror in which it was possible to contemplate the celestial map, and therefore the regular rotation of the stars, planets and constellations, making it possible to establish measurements and calculations and thus keep track of their cycles, which were related to the liturgical and ritual calendar.¹⁶ This interpretation of the bronze Sea is reinforced by the fact that it was supported by four groups of three bronze bulls each, totalling twelve, the number of the constellations and zodiacal signs.¹⁷ Each of these groups was oriented according to the four cardinal points: three to the East, three to the West, three to the South and three to the North, an arrangement reminiscent of the position of the twelve tribes of Israel in the Hebrew camp, which also corresponded to the zodiacal signs and the months of the year.¹⁸

Drawing of an apron

The esplanade on which the Temple stood was none other than the summit of Mount Moriah, which occupies a central position in relation to the surrounding hills (Mount Olivet, Bezetha, Gareb and Zion). This "central" position of Moriah corresponds perfectly with the symbolism of the Temple, which, as a "sacred centre" for a certain tradition, appeared as a reflection of the "Supreme Centre" (or of the Heavenly Jerusalem), which at a certain period had the name of Salem (meaning "Peace"), from which precisely the word Jerusalem, the "city of Peace", and also that of Solomon, which as we have said above means "the Peaceable One", derives.¹⁹ This sacred character which has always been attributed to Mount Moriah indicates that it represents a true symbol of the Axis of the world, which connects earth and heaven, the sensible reality to the super-sensible.²⁰ Some 18th century Freemasons identified Moriah with the primordial mountain, on whose summit was the earthly Paradise,²¹ with which the Temple of Jerusalem itself was identified, confirming that it was indeed built as a substitute for the Centre. Supreme.

This last reminds us of a beautiful Masonic legend, full of symbolic meaning, in which it is said that beneath the Temple of Jerusalem itself (that is, inside Mount Moriah) there was a series of superimposed rooms or chambers which appeared one after the other as one descended, until one finally reached an immense hypogean vault, that is to say, excavated directly out of the living rock.²² In this vault, in reality a temple, were the main Masonic tools and symbols, such as the square and compass, the level and plumb line, the ruler, the trowel, the mallet and chisel, the Delta with the Name of the Great Architect engraved on one of its faces, and so on. According to legend, the vault was built by none other than Henoah at the time of the

pre-flood, and therefore still very close to the earliest times.²³ What emerges from all this is quite clear, since, on the one hand, it tells us of the primordality of Masonic symbolism (that is, of its revealed origin, like that of any tradition), and on the other of the occult and subterranean aspect that at a given moment had to adopt that same symbolism, and by extension the message of the Perennial Philosophy (from which the Masonic Order itself draws), an occultism that, according to Guénon, "coincides with the very beginnings of initiation". It is precisely in this symbolic account that Hénoch appears as "the first of all Initiates, the initiating Initiate, who did not die, and who survives in all his spiritual children", attributes that are also found in Hiram, who, in effect, is symbolically reborn in each new master, thus perpetuating the chain of Masonic tradition, and with it the spirit that sustains it.

NOTES

1

It is said that Solomon wrote the Song of Songs at the same time as the Temple was being built. If, in the symbolic poetics of the Song, Solomon actually speaks of the nuptials between the soul and the spirit (between the "I" and the "Self"), the Temple of Jerusalem expresses architecturally that same nuptials, that hierogamy or sacred marriage between Earth and Heaven, for it was built according to the cosmic model, according to which the earthly world appears as the reflection of the celestial world, and in intimate communion with it. Geometrically this union is expressed by two interlaced triangles, the one being the reflection of the other, a figure which is known precisely as the "Seal of Solomon" or "Star of David". The wise king was speaking only of what happens in the heart of man (the symbolic seat of his inner temple) when he recognises himself in the universal.

2

Legends contained in various Masonic manuscripts included in Old Charges or "Old Duties", such as the Dumfries manuscript.

3

I Kings..., and II Chronicles

4

The way in which King Hiram of Tyre (a Phoenician city in present-day Lebanon) addresses Solomon when he asks him for the material and labourers for the construction of the Temple suggests that there was a close alliance between their kingdoms, forged as early as the time of David.

5

Interestingly, the latter also makes him a distant ancestor of the alchemists. In the oldest chronicles of Freemasonry, the blacksmith Tubalcain is recorded as one of its mythical founders, along with his brothers Jabel (inventor of geometry), Jubal (inventor of music) and Naamah (inventor of the art of weaving). But of them all, it is Tubalcain who has remained in Masonic rituals, especially in the master's degree, which revolves entirely around the figure of Hiram. The name Tubalcain is usually translated as "possession of the world", although it is also given the symbolic meaning of "innocence".

6

Chronicles, 2, 12-13. Likewise in I Kings, 7, 13-14, we read: "Solomon brought Hiram from Tyre, the son of a widow of Naphtali, whose father was a native of Tyre, a bronze worker. Hiram was full of wisdom, understanding and knowledge to make all kinds of works of bronze". In I Kings 5:14-28, a certain Adoniram, or Adonhiram, is also mentioned as the prefect of all the workmen. However, it is very likely that Adoniram and Hiram Abi are but one and the same personage in two different capacities. On the other hand, the name Adoniram means "Lord (Adonai) Hiram", which is perfectly complemented by Hiram Abi, or "Father Hiram". These designations make Hiram, in effect, the head of a spiritual lineage (hence he is called the "Prince of the Masons"), the recipient of a traditional heritage which he passes on by reflecting it in the various works carried out for the Hiero-Solimmitan Temple. It is not surprising then that for Freemasonry Hiram appears with the features of a civilising solar hero, who sacrifices himself and is permanently reborn as the sun king, as expressed in the Masonic rites in which he is the main element.

7

It was in fact thanks to the building of the Temple that the "conjunction" of these two forms of civilisation, the nomadic and the sedentary (arising from the first differentiation of primordial humanity) was made possible, a conjunction in which, in fact, we should see the oldest origin, historically speaking, of the Masonic tradition. In this respect, we would point out that in the biblical context the nomads were the descendants of the shepherd Abel, and the sedentary ones of the farmer Cain, who was also the first to build a city (Genesis 4, 17). To first of these civilisations belongs the tradition represented by Solomon, and to the second the tradition represented by Hiram, so that the building of the Temple also contributed to the "reconciliation" of the respective heirs of Abel and Cain. In this way, what had originally been separated cyclical reasons was brought together again with the reign of Solomon (whose name means "the Peaceable"), thus opening a new page in history that would have an impact on the subsequent development of Western civilisation, especially during the Middle Ages, in which the Temple of Jerusalem was always regarded as the very image of the "spiritual centre" and prototype of sacred architecture.

8

The "idea", or origin, which inspired the building of the Temple is of course due to Solomon (an idea handed down by David, who in turn received it from the Great Architect: "Thy son, whom I will set on thy throne in thy stead, shall build a house for my name"). But he could not have done anything without the help of King Hiram, who provided the materials and master craftsmen like Hiram Abi. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that Solomon, King Hiram and Hiram Abi are the three Grand Masters of the Masonic Order, i.e. they are at the top of its initiatory hierarchy, and those who represent them embody, symbolically at least, the respective functions of each of them. Solomon represents the purely priestly function (spiritual authority), King Hiram the regal function (temporal power), and Hiram Abi the artisanal or properly cosmogonic function. It should also be noted that until the beginning of the 18th century, in the rituals inherited from the medieval operatives, the Egyptian name of Amon appeared as the third of the Three Great Masters, a name that was replaced by that of Hiram Abi with the advent of speculative Freemasonry. In this sense, René Guénon us (*Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie et le Compagnonnage* tome II) that "this word [Amon] has in Hebrew the sense of craftsman and architect (...) Be that as it may, its root, from which the word amen also derives, expresses, in Hebrew as in

Arabian, the ideas of steadfastness, constancy, faith, fidelity, sincerity, truth, which correspond perfectly with the character attributed by Masonic legend to the Third Grand Master", that is to say, to Hiram Abi. As we can see, the name was replaced, but the spirit remained, and this is what really matters. Surely Amon is (as with Adoniram) just another of the names given to Hiram, and perhaps by his presence the operatives wished to preserve the memory of certain symbolic elements from Egyptian civilisation present in the gestation of ancient Freemasonry. See also Denys Roman, René Guénon et les Destins de la Franc-Maçonnerie, chapter IV.

9

The Debir had a perfect cubical shape, for its width, length and height measured exactly twenty cubits each. That same cubic shape is what St. John in the Apocalypse describes as that of the Heavenly Jerusalem, which the Debir (and by extension the whole Temple of Jerusalem) certainly symbolises. Let us remember, in this sense, that the Debir was the "place" (in Hebrew mishkan) of manifestation of the Shekinah, the "real presence" of the divinity: "I choose and sanctify this house, that in it my name may be called upon, and I will keep it always before my eyes and in my heart" (II Chronicles, 7, 16).

10

In their nomadic wanderings, the Hebrew people always carried the Ark of the Covenant with them as their most precious treasure, that which justified them as a people, uniting and giving meaning to all aspects of their tradition and culture through its status as a sacred centre.

11

Hence the building of the Temple also exemplifies the creation of the world, or the cosmos (conceived as an architecture), emerging from the primordial chaos from the manifestation of the Logos that utters the Fiat Lux computer. Let us recall that the Temple of Jerusalem took exactly seven years to build, which corresponds exactly to the seven days, or time cycles, in which, according to Genesis, the world was made. In Masonic symbolism this same number is of fundamental importance, particularly in the Master's Degree. We may add that the designation of the Great Architect of the Universe is not only Masonic, but was a rather common expression among the ancient Kabalists. It is also equivalent to the "Great Worker" mentioned in the Corpus Hermeticum, who is said to have "made the world, not with his hands, but with his Word".

12

These legends say that after the Flood (a geological cataclysm that actually separates two cyclical periods of the present humanity) these columns were found by Hermes and Pythagoras, which, logically, should not be understood in a literal way, but that through this apparent anachronism a deeper truth is hidden, related to the traditional inheritance that Freemasonry has received both from the Hermetic tradition and from Pythagoreanism.

13

G. de Champeaux and S. Sterckx, Introduction to the Symbols, pp. 140-141.

14

The names of these pillars derive from two biblical characters. The first, Jakin, is a direct descendant of the patriarch Jacob (Genesis 46, 10),

while Boaz (or Boaz) appears as one of King David's ancestors (Ruth 4:21).

15

The Temple of Jerusalem was oriented facing east from the Debir, which was therefore situated in the west, so that the north was to the observer's left and the south to his right. In operative Freemasonry the "throne of Solomon" was also situated to the West, "in order to allow its occupant to 'contemplate the rising of the sun' ". See R. Guénon, *The Great Triad*, chapter VII.

16

This system of astronomical observation was common in other traditional cultures, such as Egyptian and Chaldean, which were still alive at the time the Temple was built, and which certainly influenced builders who worked on it.

17

These twelve bulls symbolised above all the twelve positions of the sun around the zodiacal signs, since in the ancient civilisations of the Mediterranean basin and the Middle East the bull was an eminently solar animal. Its lunar significance came later, when the higher sense was lost along with the civilisations that possessed it.

18

In the Masonic Lodge, the presence of this zodiacal and celestial symbolism is represented by the twelve knots of the chain of union that surrounds the whole of the Lodge. It should also be noted that the banners of the twelve tribes of Israel appear in the decoration of the Chapter House of the English Royal Arch, in whose rite the symbolism of the Temple of Jerusalem plays a fundamental role.

19

Tradition has it that it was on Mount Moriah that the unconsummated sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham took place. It is very likely that this sacrifice took place on the site that centuries later came to be called 'the Rock', around which the octagonal Dome of the Rock was erected, considered in the Middle Ages to be the Mother House of the Templars (also called the Chapel of St John), and which later, during Muslim rule, became the mosque of El Aksa (for Islam it is on this rock that Muhammad ascended to heaven). The Altar of the Holocausts of the Temple of Jerusalem was also erected on this rock, at the same height as the Sea of Bronze, but in the northeast corner. It is therefore a place steeped in sacredness, of equal importance to all three monotheistic traditions.

20

In operative Freemasonry, this mountain has a special significance, since it is here that the Three Grand Masters symbolically dwell. On this subject, see the article by R. Guénon: "Heredom", in volume II of *Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie*. Also, by Pierre Girard-Augry: "Les Survivances Opératives en Angleterre et en Ecosse", which appeared in No. 3 of *Villard de Honnecourt*.

21

We are talking specifically about Martines de Pascualy, founder of the "Elus Coëns", who practised a Masonic rite strongly impregnated with elements of the

Hebraic. We have found this reference in "Quelques documents inédits", included in the aforementioned volume II of Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie et le Compagnonnage. There Guénon also points out that "the symbolic significance given here to Mount Moriah is remarkably reminiscent of that of the Hindu Meru", the sacred polar mountain identified with the Axis of the world, and on which the "Supreme Shire" or Paradesha, from which Pardès and Paradise derive, is said to be situated. In the same study Guénon quotes M. de Pascualy's interpretation of the word Moriah, which he writes Morija: "This word is divided into two parts: the first, mor, means destruction of apparent bodily forms, and ija [or iah] means vision of the Creator. We will recall that Iah is one of the names of God, designated as the "hidden central Sun of the Universe", and of which Guénon himself states that it is in relation to the Polar Star, symbol of the primordial Unity, and placed "more especially in relation to the first of the Three Great Masters [Solomon] in the seventh [and last] degree of operative Masonry", ch. XVII of the Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science.

22

This legend is read during the reception of the 13th degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, called the Royal Arch, in which these rooms are related to the sephiroth of the Kabalistic Tree of Life. Although bearing the same name, this degree is not to be confused with the aforementioned Royal Arch of the English Rite of Emulation, although in the latter the same legend appears with some variations.

23

, with this reference to Henoch, Freemasonry claims to trace its mythical origin back to antediluvian traditions. The same can be said of Noah, from whom the name Noachite, the 21st degree of Scottish Freemasonry, is derived.

GEOMETRY AND NUMBER IN REAL ART

MARC GARCIA

Freemasonry embodies an initiatory path by means of which it is still possible, in a dark and ailing West, to be effectively linked to the Unanimous and Primordial Tradition. It is an Art in which symbols, rites and myths of a cosmogonic order, which kings, warriors and craftsmen have recognised, since time immemorial, as a means of realisation, have been crystallised. metaphysics.

The neophyte initiated into the mysteries of the Royal Art receives a spiritual influence which operates his psychic regeneration, that is, his rebirth or self-awakening as a true man. This awakening corresponds symbolically to a journey from a point on a circumference to its centre, and also to a countdown that starts from the denarius and ends at the Unity, the principle that generates the multiplicity implicit in the decade. At the end of the journey through the lesser mysteries, the passage through the greater mysteries begins without interruption, the ascent along the immobile axis around which the wheel of becoming revolves, or the ray which, crossing the Sun, traces the path that returns being to the bosom of Non-Being.

Geometry, number and cosmogony

The layman who applies for admission to the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Freemasonry writes a philosophical testament in the Chamber of Reflection before the three alchemical principles. Three parts of his body are stripped before he is led, out of sight, to the door of the Temple. Having been introduced into the Lodge, he completes three journeys, and finally receives the Light at the third stroke of the Worshipful Master's mallet. The ternary presides over the beginning of the building of the inner temple of the Freemason as well as the building of the Cosmos, of which the Lodge is a perfect image.

The higher theogonies consider a principled ternary consisting of a higher principle or pure Self (in the Hindu tradition, Ishwara or Aparā-Brahma; in the Far Eastern tradition, the "Great Extreme" or Tai-ki) and the first of the dualities arising from the polarisation of Unity (Purusha and Prakriti in the Hindu tradition; Heaven, Tien, and Earth, Ti, in the Far Eastern tradition). The transcendent Being or Oneness, within which the two polarities of the primal binary are indissolubly united prior to all differentiation, presupposes another principle: the neutral and supreme Brahma (Para-Brahma) of Hinduism, the Wu-ki of Taoism, the metaphysical Non-Being or Zero of which nothing can be predicated and which contains the Being that is its affirmation.¹ According to the Kabbalah, the Absolute, in order to manifest itself, concentrates on an infinitely luminous point, leaving the darkness around it. That luminous point is Being in the bosom of Non-Being, the Unity that affirms Zero and from which the indefinite manifestations of Being emanate.²

Just as the one is the arithmetical symbol of Unity, the dimensionless point is the geometrical image of Being. Its determination within Non-Being is analogous to that which a compass point establishes by resting on a sheet of paper. The polarisation of the one-point-Being-Unity in the binary is produced by resting the second point of the compass on the sheet of paper. The two points determined on the paper are linked to each other by means of the compass, and the straight segment joining the two points is the one-dimensional projection of this link on the geometrical plane. Arithmetically, the polarisation of Unity can be symbolised as the product of two inverse numbers of each other:

$$1 = n \times 1/n$$

where n is any integer. The product $n \times 1/n$ is not distinct from the Unit; duality appears only when considering separately the two complementary elements of this product, undivided within the Unit. Another equivalent numerical image is the obtaining of the two by the sum of the Unit with its reflection, which is itself:

$$1 + 1 = 2$$

This operation neatly symbolises the genesis of the binary by the Unity, and shows that there is nothing in the nature of the binary that is distinct from the generating Unity.

The distinctive consideration of Unity and duality produces the ternary:

$$2 + 1 = 3$$

Geometrically, the ternary arises by drawing circumferential arcs centred on the two poles of the binary and cutting each, defining a third point or vertex. If the opening of the compass is equal to the distance between the extremes of the binary, the following is obtained by joining the vertices two by two by means of segments

right triangle, an equilateral triangle that again evokes the non-difference between the Unity and its dual productions.

The golden ratio is one of the most synthetic expressions of the inner character of the ternary formed by the Unity and the binary. This proportion, which in Greek antiquity was designated by the twenty-first letter of the alphabet ($21 = 2 + 1 = 3$), is obtained by dividing a segment into two parts in such a way that the length of the smaller part is to the length of the larger part as the latter is to the total length of the given segment. The smaller part is said to be the golden ratio of the larger part and the larger part is said to be the golden ratio of the initial segment. The golden ratio is the immeasurable quantity resulting from the quotient between the length of the given segment and the length of its golden segment. The latter is determined geometrically by drawing a right triangle whose legs are the given segment and its half, and subtracting the smaller leg from the hypotenuse.

The golden ratio is the only continuous ratio of three terms³ that can be constructed with only two distinct terms. The segment and its two parts are "three which are two, which are one", the symbol of a differentiation between the Unity perceived as object and the perceiver of that object both contained in the uninterrupted recognition of an all-embracing Unity. On the other hand, such differentiation prefigures the first and second dimensions of manifestation within the Unity, which is reflected by the geometrical property that if the length of the given segment is the unit of measurement, the measurements of its parts in golden ratio are the square of each other (or reciprocally, the latter the root of the former).⁴

Unity added to the ternary produces the quaternary. The Tao te King says: "The Tao gave birth to the One, the One gave birth to the Two, the Two gave birth to the Three, the Three gave birth to the innumerable things"⁵, so that, in the words of René Guénon, "the four, produced immediately by the three, is in a certain sense equivalent to the whole set of numbers, and this because, since one has the quaternary, one has also, by the addition of the first four numbers, the denarius, which represents a complete numerical cycle: $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$, which is, as we have already said on other occasions, the numerical formula of the Pythagorean Tetraktys."⁶ Four is the symbol of the Unity that manifests itself; it is the number that signifies manifestation, which unfolds in a quaternary frame of reference composed of three-dimensional space and time ($3 + 1 = 4$) in which all its elements are governed by the law of the tetrad: four cardinal points, four seasons of the year, four ages of man.

The geometric representation of the quaternary in its static aspect is the square, and in its dynamic aspect, the cross. The complementarity of both symbols is evident when the figures are inscribed on a circumference: one and the other are the result of joining the four circumscribed vertices by means of straight segments in the two ways that are possible, each one with its contiguous or each one with its opposite. The arms of the cross are like the spokes of a wheel which, by giving it rigidity, support its rotation around its axis. On the other hand, the sides of the square are like the filings or planes of the wheel that stop it turning and fix it. The square is drawn from the cross by joining adjacent ends of it. The cross is built inside the circumference, drawing a diameter and its perpendicular. This brings us back to consideration that everything starts from a unique Centre, which the quaternary manifests.

The tetrahedron is the geometric figure that expresses the quaternary in three dimensions. Its vertical projection on the plane to which its base belongs is an equilateral triangle whose three heights converge at its centre,

reflection of the apex of the polyhedron. The point affirmed in the bosom of the triangle and the summit of the tetrahedron are images of the manifested Word, hence four is said be the number of Manifestation. In the Lodge, the summit point is the eye of the luminous Delta, or the iod of the divine Tetragram, both symbols of the Great Architect of the Universe to whose glory Masons work.⁷ The quaternary is also revealed by the long square plan of the Masonic Temple and the mosaic pavement, whose dimensions are equally significant (length double or triple the width; litigation rectangle of width 3 and length 4; length and width in golden ratio, etc.).

The turning of the cross around its centre - generating the circumference which, together with its centre, represents the denarius - is the geometrical expression of the circulation of the quadrant which the Pythagorean Tetraktys symbolises arithmetically ($1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$). The cross solves exactly the inverse problem of the quadrature of the circle, dividing its area into four equal parts, which can be expressed numerically by permuting the terms of the above equality ($10 = 1 + 2 + 3 + 4$).⁸ To square the circle with a square whose area is equal to that of the given circle requires the intervention of the quinary: first, a pentagon must be inscribed in the circle; then, a second pentagon whose vertices are the midpoints of the circumferential arcs bounded by adjacent vertices of the first pentagon; and finally, two other pentagons whose vertices are found by the bisection of the arcs bounded respectively by a vertex of the first pentagon and the nearest vertex of the second. This gives four pentagons whose twenty vertices, which we can number consecutively, are distributed uniformly along the circumference. The straight lines passing through four pairs of vertices such as the second and the fifth, the seventh and the tenth, the twelfth and the fifteenth, and the seventeenth and the twentieth delimit a square whose area is very approximately that of the given circle.⁹

The sum of the Unity and its quaternary expansion considered as a reality distinct from it produces the quinary ($4 + 1 = 5$). We can say that the five is the symbol of the Unity found again in the numerical Production, just as the crossroads of the four cardinal directions reveals the centre of the cross and of the square of which the arms of the cross are its diagonals. The five brings everything back to its origin, just as at the end of the four seasons of a cycle, the fifth is again the first. In man, the fifth stage of his life, after his four ages, is an instant or point at which his death and his birth meet, the "here and now where time and space merge into the perfect unity of the eternal present".¹⁰ This point, which lies beyond three-dimensionality and temporality, corresponds symbolically to the place where the four cardinal directions meet, that is, to the centre of the cross.

Five is the number of man, of the microcosm and of the Companion, the degree Masonic initiation to which one awakens by contemplating the five-pointed Flaming Star after five journeys of instruction. In the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the central journey symbolises the inner work supported by meditation on the symbols of the seven Liberal Arts, including Geometry and Arithmetic. The pentagonal star in the centre of which shines the letter G or the Hebrew iod refers to the Great Architect of the Universe and also to the "perfect initiate that the Mason strives to be".

The geometrical outline of the five-pointed star is made by dividing a circumference into five equal parts and joining their divisions or vertices alternately (the first with the third, the third with the fifth, the fifth with the second, etc.) by means of straight segments until the polygonal line is closed.

thus described, which is achieved after two complete circles. To determine the five vertices of the star, it is necessary to draw two perpendicular diameters of the given circle, such as the vertical and the horizontal, and to draw two new inner circles tangent to each other and to the initial circle whose centres are the midpoints of the radii that make up one of the two diameters drawn. The radii of these smaller circles are half the length of the radius of the initial circle. Suppose that the centres of the smaller circles are aligned on the horizontal diameter of the larger circle; the line passing through the lower end of the vertical diameter and the centre of any one of the smaller circles cuts the latter at two points.

Drawing, with the centre at the lower end of the vertical diameter of the greater circle, circular arcs with radii equal to the distances between this end and one and the other of the previously determined points of intersection on the smaller circle, the four intersections of these arcs with the greater circle turn out to be vertices of the pentagonal star. The fifth vertex is the upper end of the vertical diameter of the initially given circumference.¹¹

Obreros trabajando Grünliche Nachricht von den Frey-Maurern, Frankfurt 1738

This geometrical construction, like all those of the Art of Forms, is a precious support for meditating on the construction of the Cosmos from the Unity, whose intermediate stage is represented by the five. The curvature of the inner circles is analogous to that of the sinuous line dividing the light and dark halves of the binary yin-yang. Likewise, the sum of the lengths of these two circumferences is equal to that of the first circumference, which is another symbolic expression of the polarisation of Unity in duality. On the other hand, the golden ratio, related to the ternary, marks the geometry of the five-pointed star: the distances between two alternating vertices and two contiguous vertices are in golden ratio, as are the length of an arm of the star and the length of a side of the inverted polygon that constitutes its body.¹² The cross from which the geometrical construction described is the trace of the quaternary in the pentagonal star; and if tangent arcs are traced to the minor circles with a centre at each of the two extremes of the vertical diameter of the first circle, so that the minor circles are inscribed in a mandorla, the distance between the vertices of this mandorla turns out to be the diameter of a circle whose length is almost identical to the perimeter of a square circumscribed to the initial circle, thus producing the circulation of the quaternary.

The consideration of the whole of individual beings - symbolised by the number five - as something apparently distinct from the Unity which is its principle and container produces the senario ($5 + 1 = 6$), the arithmetical symbol of Creation and the macrocosm. The geometrical expression of the senario is implicit the circumference, which is divided into six equal parts by its radius. The six thus defines the module of the wheel of becoming, the significant stretch that recalls, in the realm of the contingent, the permanent union between the centre and the innumerable points of the circumference, and also the unit of measurement of time.^{13,14}

By joining six points uniformly distributed on the circumference in different ways, different geometric figures of the senario are constructed. By drawing straight segments between pairs of contiguous points we obtain the regular hexagon, whose sides are equal in length to the radius of the circle in which it is inscribed. If, in addition, three alternate vertices of the hexagon are joined to its centre, the resulting figure is the projection of the three-dimensional symbol of the senarium, the cube, on a plane perpendicular to one of its

diagonals. On the other hand, if the vertices distributed along the circumference that are joined with pieces of straight lines are not contiguous but alternate, we obtain the six-pointed star of David, or Solomon's seal, which reveals the senario as the union of the unmanifested ternary and its inverted, illusory and changing reflection on the creative plane ($3 + 3 = 6$), that is, the product of the polarisation of the main triad ($3 \times 2 = 6$).

The cube is the geometrical representation of the Perfect City, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and also of the Lodge, of which it is said to have a length from east to west, a breadth from north to south, a height to the zenith, and a depth to the nadir.¹⁵ Also cube-shaped is the stone roughed by the Mason with the tools of the Royal Craft, which, because of the parallelism and straightness of its faces, perpendicular to the six directions of space, is useful for the construction of the inner temple: "..... without doubt, the cube always represents the Ideal of human perfection, in so far as it presents itself with absolute equality, straightness and tetragonal parallelism in the three dimensions of material, moral and spiritual life, while in general the first, which corresponds to length, prevails in the ordinary state and activity of mankind".

Genesis says that God completed Creation in six days, "and ceased on the seventh day from all his work which he had done".¹⁷ The seven symbolises the reunion, on the plane of Creation, of the immutable Unity that is the origin and synthesis of Creation, which is expressed arithmetically by the sum of the first seven numbers: $1+2+3+4+5+6+7=28=2+8=10=0=1$. Seven is also said to be the number of Formation, the immediate consequence of the distinctions which our mind draws between created things - represented by the senario - which are thus clothed in forms.

The construction of the heptagon and the seven-pointed star, symbolic images of the septenary, expresses geometrically the external observation, if it can be called that, which the mind makes of the manifestation by projecting forms upon it.¹⁸ To divide a circumference into seven equal parts and thus determine the vertices of an inscribed regular polygon of seven sides, one must draw a diameter and divide it into seven segments of equal length. Then, with a radius equal to the diameter drawn and centres at the two ends of the diameter, two circular arcs are made which intersect at two points outside the circumference. The line passing through one of these points and through the second of the six divisions marked on the diameter in order to divide it into seven equal parts cuts the circumference at two points. By taking the distance between the point closest to the second division of the diameter and the end of the diameter closest to that point, and carrying it seven times as the chord of the circumference, we find the seven vertices of the inscribed polygon.¹⁹ The heptagon is constructed by joining pairs of contiguous vertices, while the seven-armed star is obtained by drawing a polygon passing through the first of every three vertices (that is, joining the first vertex with the fourth, the fourth with the seventh, the seventh with the third, etc.), being closed after three complete circles.

Since the cube is a geometric expression of the senario, its centre, the point at which the arms of the three-dimensional cross formed by the heights of the polyhedron intersect, represents the septenary as a symbol of the return to the primordial Unity, which is also symbolised by the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday; these are days of rest in the week during which, in the image of Creation, man's work is carried out.

Seven is also the sum of three and four ($3 + 4 = 7$). The septenary can be contemplated, then, as the union of the principal triad presided over by the Logos and the quaternary that emanates from it, to which the division of the ancient seven Liberal Arts into three arts of the word or trivium (Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric) and four cosmogonic sciences or quadrivium (Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy) is not unconnected. Geometrically, the sum of the ternary and quaternary is analogous to the crowning of a square with a triangle, the resulting figure being the elevation of the pointed cubic stone, which, like the number seven, symbolises the perfection of the Royal Craft. Seven Masons make a "just and perfect" Lodge, as seven notes complete the musical scale "which reproduces the sound of the seven planets in their rotation".²⁰

At the centre of the seven planetary spheres is the Earth, symbol of the material world as a whole, which, as a product of Unity and of the world of forms, is characterised by the number eight. Geometrically, the eight can be represented by two squares, one inscribed in the other and such that the vertices of one are the midpoints of the sides of the other. It is the image of the vessel into which the four alchemical principles of matter are combined to produce the substance of the Universe, or the athanor into which the seven metals of the Great Work are poured, the cauldron being none other than the soul of the alchemist himself. The form of the eight evokes the continuous flowing of the waters of the psyche which the Adept seeks to still.

Mercury, to which the fluid movement of the psyche is related, is in correspondence with the eighth sephiroth of the kabalistic Tree of Life.²¹ The octagon is the geometrical expression of the intermediary character possessed by all that is animic and mercurial. This polygon, which is constructed by joining the ends of two crosses inscribed on a circumference such that the arms of one are the bisectors of the right angles formed by the arms of the other, is a transitional constructive form used in temples of most traditions to support a hemispherical dome or cupola, referring to heaven, on a square base symbolising the stability of the earth. The octagonal shape is also found in baptismal fonts and the ancient baptisteries of Christian temples. They are places of passage located outside or at the entrance of churches, in an intermediate location between a profane and a sacred space where a sacrament takes place which, within the sphere of the individual, concerns the intermediary psychic domain between the spirit and the body.^{22, 23} Initiatic death is another transit with which the eight is, we might say, even more so; like Christian baptism, it involves a second birth, but of a different and superior nature in that it produces, beyond the psychic effects of an individual order to which regeneration by exoteric means is confined, a transmutation that leads the being to the starting point of a realisation of a supra-individual order.²⁴

The establishment of an (apparent) differentiation between material realisation and Unity leads to the ninth ($8 + 1 = 9$). The nine is the symbol of indefinite multiplicity, represented by the indefinite points of the circumference which correspond to the indefinite formal manifestations of the Self.²⁵ The nine, like the circumference, returns to itself incessantly ($9 = 9 + 8 + 7 + 6 + 5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 45 = 4 + 5 = 9$), which evokes the imprisoning aspect of the material forms of manifestation, and in particular of the skin of which the human state of the Self is clothed. There is no possible way out of the tangent at the mercy of the current of becoming or by trying to outrun it,²⁶ just as there is no way out of the novena by multiplying nine by another whole number, since the result is always

is reducible to nine. The only way out of the circumference is inward, on the way to the centre or Unity into which all that is manifested must be reabsorbed, completing the cycle: $9 + 1 = 10 = 1 + 0 = 1$.

Epilogue

The Apprentice Mason entering the Lodge takes his seat in the Septentrion column. This is said to be the least enlightened region of the temple, suitable for one who has just begun his journey on the path of Knowledge and who "is not yet capable of bearing a great light". Coming from the realm of the total manifestation of the Self, symbolised by the denarius and the wheel or circle, he begins his return journey to the Unity, that is, to the centre of himself, illuminating his steps with a still faint inner clarity. Like the character of the ninth arcane of the Tarot, lantern in hand, he advances slowly, patiently and in solitude, returning from nine to eight, from eight to seven...

NOTES

1

René Guénon, *The Great Triad*, chapter II. Obelisk, 1986.

2

René Guénon, *On Number and Mathematical Notation*. Cuadernos de la Gnosis nº 4, p. 7. Ed. Symbolos, 1994.

3

Proportional ratio of three quantities of which one is the middle term, the form $a/b = b/c$. In the golden ratio, a is the length of the given segment, b is the length of its golden segment and c is the length of the smaller part.

4

See Robert Lawlor, *Sacred Geometry*, chapter V. Editorial Debate, 1993. The "unit of measurement" referred to is a length chosen by convention as a scale in order to be able to measure other lengths in relation to it.

Being a continuous magnitude, it is divisible indefinitely, unlike the arithmetical unit, which is necessarily indivisible and without parts (see René Guénon, *On Number and Mathematical Notation*. Notebooks of Gnosis no. 4, pp. 25-26. Symbolos, 1994). On the other hand, if in the equation of the note 3 the length a is assigned a value of 1, c becomes the square of b , and reciprocally, b the square root of c .

5

Lao Tse, *Tao te King*, XLII. Version by John C. H. Wu. Editorial Edaf, 1993.

6

René Guénon, *The Principles of the Infinitesimal Calculus*, chap. IX

7

See Seven Master Masons, *Symbol, Rite, Initiation*. La Cosmogonía Masónica, ch. 13. Ed. Obelisco, 1992.

8

René Guénon, On Number and Mathematical Notation. Cuadernos de la Gnosis no. 4, p. 11. Ed.

9

See Robert Lawlor, op. cit., chapter VII.

10

Federico Gonzalez, The Tarot of the Kabbalists, Magical Vehicle, chapter II. Editorial Kier, 1993 (Italian translation on the author's website).

11

See Robert Lawlor, op. cit., chapter VII. Another simpler and better known way of dividing the circumference into five equal parts is to draw two perpendicular diameters of the said circumference and to fold over one of them, by means of a turn around the midpoint of one of its two half-diameters, the straight segment joining that point with one end of the other diameter. The distance between the said midpoint and its corresponding obliquity is equal to the distance between two consecutive vertices of a five-pointed star inscribed in the given circle.

12

See Robert Lawlor, op. cit., chapter VI.

13

On the road between Jerusalem and Emmaus, Christ reveals to two of his disciples the inner meaning of the Scriptures (Lk 24:13-35). Interestingly, the distance between the two towns is "sixty furlongs".

14

It is no coincidence that the day is divided into $6 \times 4 = 24$ hours, the hour into $6 \times 10 = 60$ minutes and the minute into $6 \times 10 = 60$ seconds.

15

Seven Master Masons, op. cit., ch. 29.

16

See Aldo Lavagnini, Companion Manual, p. 126. Kier, 1992.

17

Gen 2, 2.

18

The inscription on a circle of a heptagon or its equivalent stellated polygon rests on a point outside the circle.

19

This geometrical construction has a wider application. If the diameter of the circumference is divided into N equal parts, where N is any number

integer greater than or equal to 3, the vertices of a regular inscribed polygon of N sides are obtained.

20

Seven Master Masons, op. cit., ch. 17.

21

See Federico González, op. cit., chap. 1.

22

See René Guénon, Símbolos Fundamentales de la Ciencia Sagrada, chap. XLII. Ed. Eudeba, 1988.

23

If we understand, or at least interview the *raison d'être* of the form and location of the baptismal font, its replacement by a basin placed next to the altar, so frequent in today's celebrations of Christian baptism, is tremendously grotesque.

24

René Guénon, *Aperçus sur l'Initiation*, chap. XXIII. Editions Traditionnelles, 1992.

25

René Guénon, *On Number and Mathematical Notation*. Cuadernos de la Gnosis n° 4, pp. 14-15. Ed. Symbolos, 1994.

26

One could say that this is what the modern world is striving for: rowing, to arrive faster than the river water at the waterfall where it must finally fall.

SYMBOLISM OF MASONIC INITIATION FRANCISCO

ARIZA

Fundamentally, the initiatory structure of Freemasonry is no different from that of any other esoteric and traditional organisation. Its division into three degrees of apprentice, companion and master forms a scheme belonging to any regular initiatory path, constituting a synthesis of the very process of Knowledge and its effective realisation.¹ Likewise, this initiatory ternary is analogous to the three planes or levels of cosmic manifestation: the Corpus Mundi, the Anima Mundi and the Spiritus Mundi, according to the terminology of medieval Christian hermeticism. The Body, Soul and Universal Spirit thus correspond to the degrees of apprentice, companion and master respectively. Hence the initiatory realisation reproduces stage by stage the very process of formation of the cosmos or the universal order, is why, because of the analogy between the macrocosm and the microcosm, this ternary is

also that of the constitution of the human being considered in its entirety. Using geometrical symbolism, the three worlds (and the three initiatory degrees) are represented as concentric circles, where, naturally, the outermost and most peripheral would correspond to the corporeal plane, the intermediate to the soul or psychological plane, and the innermost to the spiritual plane.² The point which is tacitly or explicitly represented in the centre of this last circle would symbolise the primordial Being or Unity, which in Masonic language is none other than the Great Architect of the Universe (identical with the Aristotelian "immobile motor"), which, though in itself unmanifested as the point, which in reality does not exist in space, is nevertheless the principle from whose emanation or expansion all manifestation is generated, and which depends entirely upon it in all that it has of reality.

In this sense the transmission of the spiritual influence received by Masonic initiation is analogous to the action of the Fiat Lux emanating from the divine Word "in the Beginning", giving rise to cosmic order. And just as that order was "brought out of chaos" by the action of the luminous and spermatic Word, so man is rescued from the profane world, or from the "outer darkness",³ by the clarifying irradiation generated in his consciousness by the creative power of spiritual influence or initiatory "illumination", which takes place in the heart, that is, in the very centre of his being. In this way, and similar to this cosmogenesis, a spiritual anthropogenesis takes place, which is equivalent to the generation or birth of the new man. This luminous Word, Logos or primordial Sound that breathes life and being into amorphous matter is also a "rhythm" whose vibrational cadence articulates and orders it. And this creative rhythm is the cosmic gesture or rite par excellence, the prototype of all initiatory rites, which would explain why these are essential to convey the spiritual influence, which basically seeks to transmit to the being the energy of Intelligence and Knowledge through the symbolic code and its ritualisation, awakening him to his higher possibilities according to what was made "in the Beginning", and thus inserting him mythical and true time.

Freemasonry being a tradition originating in the ancient initiatory organisations and guilds of "free" builders (the medieval Freemasons and companions), it conceives of Unity as a Supreme Architect or Ordainer, and of the cosmos as its most perfect and eloquent work, which makes it possible for man to take the latter as a living symbol that enables him to recognise (because it contains them within itself) the principles or archetypes that determine all creation, both in Heaven and on Earth. These universal principles and laws, and the visible and invisible, tangible and subtle order that emanates from them, are expressed through the proportions, measures, rhythms and structures of numbers and geometric figures, the foundation of all cosmogonic arts and sciences, and above all of sacred architecture, the synthesis of them all. If Freemasonry (like Alchemy) is called the "Royal Art", it consists in nothing other than the actualisation,⁴ on the plane of man and life, of all the possibilities of manifestation conceived and eternally contained in the Mind and Wisdom of the Creator, who "arranged all things in number, weight and measure",⁵ which is "the number, weight and measure of all things", weight and measure",⁵ which gives us the idea of the existence of a prototypical model reiterated in any creative gesture, whether that gesture is the creation of a world, of a being or of a work of art, the latter being the one that man can finally make with himself within himself. That is why the learning, knowledge and incarnation of this model, which the entire cosmos symbolises, make the Mason a worker in the universal construction, in which he consciously collaborates, and can thus read in the "Book of the World" or "Book of Life". Accessing this cosmovision, this harmonious order, leads to the contemplation of Beauty, which is a divine name and therefore a powerful energy of transmutation and regeneration.⁶

This leads us to consider that, in addition to the Word that breathes life into the amorphous matter, or original nourishing substance, there is also the action of a divine "gesture" in the creation of the world. And it is precisely this mysterious gesture⁷ that establishes the aforementioned analogy between the cosmic and initiatory processes. Indeed, the transmission of spiritual influence in Freemasonry is conveyed by the ritualisation of certain sacred words and gestures, the latter being divided into "signs" and "touches".⁸ In this sense, we must remember that these ritual words and gestures are nothing more than the very energy of the symbol put into action, which enables the idea that the symbol itself conveys to reveal itself in its full force and to fertilise the being who receives it, making him pass, as we have said before, from "power to act" or from "darkness to light". The symbolic code is not something that can be apprehended from the outside, as if one were not included or part of the idea it conveys. Man begins to be aware of his being in the world when he understands that he himself is a symbol, that is to say that he must see himself as in a mirror in which the universal Being and life are reflected. In reality every rite is a symbol, or idea, in movement, and every symbol, in its turn, is nothing but the fixation of a ritual gesture carried out according to order, that is, according to the model of what was done "in the Beginning". The rite is the "living" of the symbolic idea because in fact the rite itself is nothing but that same idea articulated in space and time, that is to say in the totality of our existence, which thus acquires its full meaning by being integrated into the cadence of universal harmony and rhythm, always identical to itself because it constitutes the expression of the undifferentiated Unity, alpha and omega of all creation. In this respect, it is quite significant that the word gesture also has the meaning of "gestation", and therefore of "generation", which in the initiatory and symbolic context is linked to spiritual rebirth, of a "rebirth" by and in Knowledge.⁹

Each of the Masonic degrees of apprentice, companion and master has its own words and ritual gestures, which, although received in stages, are nevertheless perfectly coordinated, ultimately forming a single inseparable and indistinct word and gesture, analogous to those that were uttered at the origin, which is thus actualised and made present. From all this it follows that the culmination on a path such as that proposed by Masonic initiation is none other than total identification with the creative (generative) act of the Great Architect, an identification which only becomes effective with the arrival at mastery, or, in other words, when the human individuality is universalised by being absorbed, through the attraction born of the love of Knowledge, into the unity of its divine Principle, from which it was only illusorily separated.¹⁰ What we are saying is closely related to what in Freemasonry is called the "search for the lost Word", which is the true Name of the Great Architect, and which man has to recompose by "reuniting the dispersed" of his being, for after all that Name is the whole cosmos considered in its immutable and imperishable essence.

Tradition teaches us that awakening to the reality of Knowledge is simultaneous with the opening of the various subtle centres (or chakras, according to the Hindu tradition) located symbolically along the spinal column. Each centre is the recipient of a certain cosmic energy experienced in man as a state of consciousness, and this by virtue of the law of correspondence and analogy between the macrocosm and the microcosm, correspondence and analogy that constitute the very foundation of symbolic science, for thanks to them we can recognise the universal in the individual, and the individual in the universal, understanding that both are but one and the same reality, as the Hermetic Emerald Tablet tells us: "that which is below is as that which is above, and that which is above as that which is below, to work the miracle of a single thing". Also, that these centres are hierarchically arranged along the spine (an image of the Axis of the World),

indicates the idea of a gradual and gradual ascent: from that which is located at the very base of the spine, and linked to the telluric and earthly energies, to that which is located at the top of the cranial vault, through which the passage to the higher, supra-cosmic and metaphysical states takes place. If man, like the universe or the cosmos, is an alchemical atanor, spiritual development is accomplished to the very extent that the cooking, distillation, purification and transmutation of the lower energies into higher ones takes place.

Picture of the Apprentice Lodge Le Parfait Maçon, 1744

The number of these centres, and even the order of their arrangement, varies in different traditions. In the case of Freemasonry, these centres are located at specific points marked by gestural signs made by a certain position of the hands, which are called "recognition" and "penalisation" signs, and whose position is different in each of the three degrees.

In the first degree the sign is made at the level of the throat, in the second at the level of the heart, in the third at the level of the navel or between the two hips, and finally at the top of the head. To this must be added the vocalisation of the words of passage and the sacred words specific to each degree, which in themselves reveal a symbolic meaning directly related to the search for the "Lost Word", that is to say to the stages experienced during the process of inner realisation. Naturally, we cannot develop here all that this rich symbolism suggests, and will only indicate that the signs, touches and symbolic words in Freemasonry are similar to mu dras (hand gestures) and mantrams (pronunciation of names, words and sacred syllables). This proves the perfect concordance existing between the various initiatory forms as regards the constitution or internal architecture of the human being, a clear example of the universality and coherence of the traditional doctrine wherever it manifests itself.

In the discourse of existence, initiation imposes a centre, an axis around which everything will begin to be ordered and to make sense, to be meaningful. Such a centre is always present in the heart of man, and is, like the altar in the Temple, the point of heaven-earth communication; or to put it in Taoist terms, where "the attraction of the Will of Heaven" is exerted on human individuality. Establishing contact with the radius leading to that centre involves, first of all, causing a level break or split in ordinary time, and recovering the memory of the magical, sacred and mythical time where everything is true and always here and now, and nothing is subject to the succession of cause and effect that is the karmic law of the sublunar world or samsara. And while it is very difficult to escape this law entirely, as beings still submerged in the conditions and limitations of individual existence, it is possible to reconcile the actions and reactions that they provoke in the psyche (which they shape), for in the labyrinth that they weave around us is that empty, virginal space where the garden of the soul flourishes and regeneration is possible. Thus, it is only from this first rupture that one can properly say that the path of Knowledge begins, which entails an intense work with oneself.

Picture of the Companions Le Parfait Maçon, 1744

The mutations of the Symbolic Stone

In Freemasonry this work consists of roughing out and perfecting the "rough stone", which is the symbol of the apprentice, while the "cubic" stone is the symbol of the apprentice.

belongs to the companion, and the "pointed cubic stone" to the master. This successive mutation of the symbolic stone, analogous to alchemical transmutation, indicates three key moments in Masonic work. The rough stone has already been spoken of as a symbol of the steadfastness and immutability of the Spirit. However, since symbols often lend themselves to a double meaning, in Freemasonry, which, let us not forget, comes from a tradition of builders, and without completely losing that meaning, the rough stone becomes more a symbol of pre-cosmic chaos, and in a certain sense can be seen as an image of the profane world, from which the apprentice comes and which he has to overcome in his attempt to go from "darkness to light". In this symbolic context, the rough edges and roughness of the rough stone represent the deformations of the human soul subject to egotistical influences and mental illusions of all kinds, which are an obstacle to spiritual evolution. A purifying asceticism is therefore necessary which, while smoothing away the rough edges of the rough stone of consciousness, will lead to an orderly development of the higher possibilities contained therein, which remain in an embryonic and latent state as long as they are not manifested. In Masonic initiation the first work of the apprentice is carried out with the mallet and the chisel, tools which respectively symbolise the force of will and the faculty of intelligence, which distinguishes, separates and determines that which in being is permanent and coessential to its nature (that which that being "is" in itself), from that which constitutes its superfluous and external additions. In Masonic language, this clarifying action is called the "stripping of metals", which is basically identical to what in alchemy is called "separating the thick from the thin", i.e. the profane from the sacred. Understood in this way, the will is that subtle fire which, generated by the illuminating action of spiritual influence, promotes in man the love or passion for Knowledge, and in this sense the terms will, believe, and create are exactly the same. However, in order that it may not be dispersed, this inner force must be well directed by a right intention, or intellectual rigour, which channels and concentrates it in view of a theoretical and effective understanding of the universal principles, which, we repeat, are revealed by the laws, rhythms and cycles which regulate the harmonious order of Creation. Only thus, by combining in a single act, which becomes ritual and permanent because it has been "incorporated" into the nature of being, the force of love and the rigour of intelligence, will the "chaotic matter" be patiently carved out, until the apprentice, intuiting the Beauty or ideal "form" hidden in that deformed matter,¹¹ "rises" to a higher degree of his inner hierarchy, that is, to a companion.

At this new stage of his journey, the initiate into the mysteries of the Self needs other symbols and tools in order to continue the work of regeneration. In this way, and in order for the rough stone to be polished, the help of the square is essential, which marks out the perfect carving and cubing. The square, being also a symbol of inner straightness, is associated with the idea of axiomaticity, as its shape is the result of the union of a vertical and a horizontal axis at its vertex. It is precisely by becoming aware of these two geometric coordinates (which express universal principles) that the rough stone will become, or rather "transmute" into cubic stone. Moreover, it is obvious that cubic stone is the most suitable stone for construction, that is to say, the one that makes it possible to "raise" the work from its foundations. But this lifting will be carried out with the intervention of two other tools, which are complementary: the level and the plumb line. With the former, the companion will make sure that the base is not uneven, or in other words, that the purification with the mallet and chisel has been carried out effectively, thus ensuring the firmness and stability of the interior work. This is a symbolism that expresses the joint action of the four cardinal virtues, which effectively "level" and balance the impulses of the passions inherent in human nature: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths; every ravine shall be filled in, every mountain and hill shall be made low, the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places shall be ways

plain" (Luke, III, 4-5). In this sense, the cardinal virtues correspond, architecturally, to the four foundation stones located at the four corners or angles of the temple, supporting it in its vertical elevation.

In turn, the plumb line will prove the perpendicularity of the building, as it points to an invisible but no less real axis which holds together and maintains in equilibrium the structure of our universe and all things contained therein, including of course man. The verticality of the plumb line, symbolically suspended from the hand of the Great Architect, "falls by weight" towards the centre of the earth, pointing to the depth of Knowledge which penetrates to the innermost recesses of the human soul, "illuminating" its darkest aspects, for there, in those depths, lies the "secret fire" of the Spirit, the true artificer of the whole work of transmutation. Certainly, the meaning of the alchemical acronym V.I.T.R.R.I.O.L. engraved on the "Chamber of Reflection", symbolically situated "beneath" the Lodge itself, is no other: "Visit the Interior of the Earth (of yourself) and Rectifying you will find the Hidden Stone", which is the true "medicine" of which the master alchemists speak.

Picture of the Master's Lodge Le Parfait Maçon, 1744

This rectification is simultaneous with the reintegration of the individual into the universal, which entails a total psychological reconversion that brings about the new birth. That which was dispersed has been reunited and "crystallised" into a form, a structure that reflects (having "conformed" to the harmony of the cosmic order) its prototypical and imperishable model. The companion, in understanding and living the mysteries of cosmogony, which are his own, we repeat, makes of his trade (whatever it may be) a ministry, and of his life an art, freely executing and transmitting the orders received from the Great Geometer, which is the name given in this degree to the Great Architect or Principle of Universal Construction. Likewise, this rebirth, this being born again in and through Knowledge, is symbolised by the pentagrammatic star or "Flaming Star". The five points of this star indicate that man has accessed his "quintessence", which means that he has realised and developed all the possibilities comprised in the human state. On the other hand, the quintessence is the centre of the cross of the four elements, and therefore the point of conciliation and overcoming of the opposing energies which these elements represent on the plane of matter and psyche. It is evident that in the constructive symbolism the quintessence is represented by the "foundation stone", situated in the very centre of the square marked by the four corner stones, literally "corner stones", which are like a quadripartite reflection of the foundation stone in the centre, equivalent to the altar of the temple. In the middle of the flaming Star is the letter "G", curiously the initial of Geometry and of God (G od), a letter that Guénon says replaced the Hebrew Iod, which is the symbol of the Great Unity. Thus, at the centre of the human state, in its heart, what actually dwells is the divine Principle, which, having as its support in our world the regenerated human individuality, radiates its light to all things.¹²

What makes the cosmos intelligible, what gives it all its meaning and reality, is precisely that which is "beyond" it, the unmanifested, "...for it is the emptiness of the centre that makes the wheel useful" (Tao-te-King, XI). In this centre, around which all the revolutions of the wheel of the world take place, is symbolically situated the "Middle Chamber" of the Master Mason. It is in this chamber that the mysteries of the "second death" and the "third birth" take place, exemplified by the ritual death of Master Hiram, his subsequent

burial, his search, and finally his "resurrection", symbolised by the acacia branch. Having made the horizontal journey that led him to the altar or heart of the sanctuary, the being passes from the square to the circle, or from the square to the compass. This is the passage from earth to heaven, or, in other words, an "exaltation" along the vertical axis to the keystone in the centre of the dome (or head) of the templecosmosman. To the cubic stone (symbol of the cosmos), a pyramid is added at the top, henceforth called the "pointed cubic stone", which symbolises the completion and perfection of the work, its vertical and celestial "crowning".¹³ This idea of a crowning referred to the pointed cubic stone fits perfectly with the Christian symbolism of the "cornerstone", which, due to its shape, could only be placed when the construction was finished, specifically in the keystone or "eye of the dome".¹⁴

But in reality, whether it be the , the apex of the pyramid, the centre of the circle or the wheel, what resides in all these symbols is the secret of the ineffable Name, the point of non-manifestation wherein dwells the "One without a second" who knows Himself only by Himself. This is the last gate to be crossed by man, who "to the question 'who are you', which is put to him when he reaches that gate, can answer with truth: 'I am Thou'".¹⁵

NOTES

1

We are not going to speak here of the so-called "high degrees" or "complementary degrees to the Master's degree", the number of which varies in each of the present Masonic Rites. We think that some of these high degrees represent a development of certain initiatory aspects already contained in the Master's degree.

2

The same cosmic and initiatory structure is found in the ancient symbol of the "triple druidic enclosure", in which three concentric squares are distinguished, from the innermost of which four lines start and pass through the other two squares to their boundaries. In the initiatory hierarchy, the lines starting from the central square correspond to the channels through which the teaching of doctrine and Knowledge is transmitted, from a sinistra to a dextra, to all the rest of the initiatory organisation. In Freemasonry the three squares (or circles) together are equivalent to the three "Chambers" of the degrees of apprentice, companion and master. In the latter, the Chamber is called the "Middle Chamber", and would then be identified with the central square of the Druidic triple enclosure (see Chapter X of René Guénon's *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*).

3

The expression "outer darkness", or "lower darkness", which is used to refer to the profane world, is the inverted and dark reflection of the "higher rather than luminous darkness", which forms the intelligible sphere of the spiritual archetypes.

4

In the sense that Aristotle gave to the expression from potency to act, i.e. as a passage from possibility to the actual contained in it.

5

Wisdom, XI 20.

6

Beauty is the name given to one of the three pillars on which the Masonic temple, and by extension the temple of the world, is built. The other two pillars are called Wisdom and Strength. Wisdom, Strength and Beauty are respectively equivalent to the divine "number, weight and measure".

7

A truly timeless principle, as it is happening in these very moments, which relates to the "world created at every instant" or "renewed at every breath" of Islamic Sufism.

8

Words and gestures fall within the traditional classification established between sound symbols and visual symbols, respectively.

9

It has been said that knowledge and knowledge are exactly the same, and you are what you know.

10

Entry into the master's degree represents the reintegration of the "primordial state" as it was experienced by the first men in Paradise. If up to this degree the journey has been horizontal (terrestrial), from this point onwards begins the vertical ascent through the higher states of being, linked to the various planetary heavens. On the other hand, it should be clear that we are speaking here of the inner Master, for in present-day Freemasonry very few of those who hold this degree (often conferred for the purely practical needs of the Lodge) have even managed to become true apprentices or companions.

11

According to alchemy, lead, the densest and most opaque metal, conceals the unchanging luminosity of gold.

12

The letter Iod is the first of the four Hebrew letters that make up the Tetragrammaton, the ineffable name of God. Likewise, among the Operatives, the Pentagrammatic Star was the symbol of the Pole Star and therefore of the Great Architect. This idea was no doubt inherited from the Pythagoreans, for whom the Pentagram was their sign of recognition, as well as being the symbol of universal Harmony. The Pythagoreans designated the pentagram by the name of pentalpha, as it is formed by the meeting of five (penta) alphas, which is also the first letter of the Greek alphabet. In this connection we must remember that the Pythagoreans made each of the sums of the pentalpha correspond to one of the letters of the word "eigeia" (health), bodily health being a living symbol of the inner harmony and equilibrium of the regenerated man who reaches the centre of himself. In addition, these letters were arranged according to the sense of

This indicates quite clearly the connection of Pythagoreanism with the Primordial or Hyperborean Tradition.

13

The "pointed cubic stone" synthesises the union of the square and the triangle at the top, or, according to another symbolism, the realisation of the four cardinal virtues and the three theological virtues, the one terrestrial and the other celestial. This same figure created by the union of the square and the triangle is the alchemical symbol of the "philosopher's stone", which also represents the completion and perfection of the Great Hermetic Work. As we can see, it is the septenary ($3 + 4 = 7$), which is taken in all traditions as the cosmogonic number par excellence. We will add that seven is the number necessary for a Lodge to be "just and perfect".

14

In Christian symbolism the cornerstone is identified with Christ Himself, who represents the same spiritual principle as the Great Architect in Freemasonry. The uselessness of this stone during construction actually confirms its supracosmic character, for it can occupy no other place than the very centre of dome. This stone is the true keystone, that is to say, the "key" (key) by which the symbolic meaning of the whole construction is understood. It is in fact at the beginning and the end of the whole work, just as the Spirit is the Alpha and the Omega of all creation.

15

René Guénon, "KâlaMukha", chap. LIX of Fundamental Symbols

APPRENTICESHIP DEGREE WORK

Although they all begin with the expression "To the Glory of the Great Architect of the Universe. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. Venerable Master, Dearly Beloved Brethren", we indicate this only at the beginning to avoid unnecessary repetition. The titles or headings where this is stated have been retained.

A. L. G. G. D. G. A. D. U. L. I. F.

V. M., QQ. HH.:

Yesterday, February 2nd, the Christian liturgy celebrated the feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple, forty-five ($4 + 5 = 9$) days after his birth on December 25th. This marks the beginning of the month of purifications (February) celebrated by both pagan and Catholic rites. This purification is also symbolised by the blessing and lighting of the candles (2 February is called Candlemas), which symbolises on the one the vital fire that appears in nature and announces the coming of the cyclical renewal of the cosmos with spring, and on the other hand Christ himself, the light of the world announcing "new life", a fact exemplified and ritualised through baptism.

It is also no coincidence that today, February 3rd, the Tabernacle of David, father of King Solomon, the builder of the temple in Jerusalem, the archetypal image of our Temple, is consecrated. This event is analogous to the previous one, exemplifying in the death of King David and the coronation of Solomon this cyclical renewal and transmission of "new blood" and the beginning of a new cycle. We can see in King Solomon's accession to the throne a "baptism carried out by his father David who, after this initiatory rite, dies.

All this, obeying cosmic laws that develop in spite of the cosmos itself, has its effect on man, who on his initiatory path passes through successive deaths and births, thus ritualising and making effective in his person the cyclical order that marks every process of manifestation.

But this death does not have, as at Easter, a sacrificial character. It refers to a cyclical change, leaving behind the "old year" and lighting the fire of the "new year". It is an initiation in the clearest sense of the term: the "old man" (the one born into the sensible world) is transformed into the "new man" (the one born into the spiritual world) and from here begins the journey through the year (the round way). Thus man orders and is ordered with respect to the Norm.

** *

Choice of symbolic name

Master René Guénon writes in *Aperçus sur l'Initiation* that it is an immediate logical consequence of initiation, as a second birth, that "the initiate receives a new name, different from his profane name; and this is not a mere formality, since this name must correspond to an equally different modality of his being, the realisation of which is made possible by the action of the spiritual influence transmitted by initiation" (chap. XXVII). To designate a member of an initiatory organisation by his profane name "will be branded as a falsehood, just as would be the confusion between an actor and a character whose name is obstinately applied to him in all the circumstances of his existence" (ibid.).

In the Agartha Programme we are told that to name is to give intelligible existence to things, to rescue from them their identity, their quality and their noblest and most universal meaning. This faculty, which we exercise by pronouncing a symbolic name, is God-given and is linked to spiritual intuition. With the name, function and destiny are attributed to the being named.

This being so, I beg you, QQ. HH., to name me H. Hermit from now on. The Hermit depicted in the ninth card of the Tarot walks in darkness with the faint light of a lantern in his hand. It would seem that he is in search of the true light, as are all of us who have asked to be received as Masons; his image projects upon us the reminder that "we are not really Masons until the day our spirit has been opened to the intelligence the mysteries of Freemasonry" (Ritual of the First Symbolic Degree). As a Mason, my destiny is none other than to enable the effective illumination of my heart.

It is the number of the circumference, whose indefinite points can exist only from the centre, of which they are the apparent reflection, and to which they must return at the end of the cycle. 9 is 32

or 3 x 3; it contains, therefore, the number of the Apprentice, on which the principal Triunity acts and which it raises by holding it up, like the staff to the Hermit.

The Hermit is a symbol of interiority, of hidden knowledge, enlightenment and wisdom, of patience, of perseverance, of the silencing of passions; in short, of what is virtually within us.

* * *

The mallet and the chisel

The crude stone, the image of undifferentiated raw material and of the chaos of the lower states, is the symbol of the degree of the Apprentice. It is upon this rough stone, which we can well understand as the Apprentice himself, that the path of the Great Work is to be undertaken.

In our Order there are two tools that have been bequeathed to undertake the task in this degree; the mallet and the chisel.

The Gavel represents the will with which the Apprentice will strike and expel all the psychological aspects that have formed his individual personality: dreams, emotions, burdens, attachments, illusions, must be transformed into Universal Will. It is the force and energy of the Mallet that strikes all these individual aspects in an exercise of certainty and rigour.

The Chisel represents the Intelligence with which the Apprentice, having struck his individual rough edges, begins to mould the rough stone, through the discernment that will separate the subtle from the dense, and to direct with intelligence the decision of the will.

The Mallet and the Chisel operate together and simultaneously on the raw stone.

The Mallet drives individual questions out of the stone with will and force, and the Chisel reintegrates universal questions with discernment and beauty.

The grinding and polishing of the rough stone and the permanent meditation of this symbolic gesture will free the Apprentice from his individual and psychic ties, and will confer on him beyond dreams the possibility of inserting himself in a reality of universal order, that of a real mediator between heaven and earth.

* * *

Plumb and level

It might seem at first glance that these constructive elements of such importance in Freemasonry are only specifications on a literal level of symbols of a higher order, the vertical and the horizontal, from which they derive and to which they are superimposed from the outside, even masking their synthetic image.

This is not case. Symbolics studies the different symbols, observing their interaction and complementarity; these relationships form groups or families within which each symbol focuses attention on a particular aspect, shedding light on the others.

In the case of the vertical, the idea of axis is enriched from different angles. The staircase emphasises the mobility of energies, the descent of the spiritual flow and the ascent through the different states of being. The column speaks of the support necessary to sustain the building, of the union between the high and the low. The tree speaks of hierarchy, embodied in its different parts: root, trunk and crown. The sword and the spear, from a warrior's perspective, redound to the masculine image of essential action over substantial passivity. They all see in the vertical, the spiritual and celestial. The same happens on the other hand with the symbols that, under different prisms, speak to us of the horizontal as the material and terrestrial.

This wealth of images and links leads to the awakening, in those who contemplate them, of the related plot within themselves, by identification between the knower and the known. It is precisely with the recognition of these sparks or lights that the itinerary from the periphery to the centre takes shape; a path that each one traces as he follows it, designed by him and for him, and which, being different from all the others, especially at the beginning when he chooses the voices that seem to speak to him from closer to him, become progressively closer as they lead to the same end.

Having said that, it should be stressed that these correspondences and analogies should not be confused with detailed analyses or lead to any system; what is being contemplated here is something alive, life itself, and not its caricatured fixation. We are too accustomed to stagnate what flows, to compartmentalise and fossilise, making us impervious to the true nature of things and to its message.

Every symbolic image can ultimately be assimilated to the geometrical figure it represents, or in other words to a number, and from this to the unity from which it proceeds and from which all division, even that of the first polarity, is illusory. But this truth of a metaphysical order, which considers the Principle from the Principle itself, does not exclude that from the manifestation every symbol has its *raison d'être* on every plane of reading and concretely on the plane on which it materialises, where through the senses we perceive its singular character and where the magical journey mentioned above begins.

In the case of the plumb and level it is through the constructive rite, the foundation of our Order, that the vertical and the horizontal are offered for meditation.

The plumb line or perpendicular consists of a piece of lead hanging at the end of a thread, and taking advantage of the force of gravity it marks the vertical line. The tension between the two ends reflects the Hindu theory of the three "gunas", essential qualities present in all beings; here "tamas" is expressed by lead, the heaviest of metals, and its downward tendency towards the lower states. In opposition, "sattwa" shows us the direction in which lead, through successive transmutations, is called upon to ascend until its final conversion into gold. The projection of this axis within oneself gives the initiate the notion of righteousness and enables him to recover the true meaning of words such as integrity, nobility or virility, which in our days have been

They become insignificant, or worse, they are understood as something external, linked to certain forms that conceal the opposite of what they appear to be and therefore bear the mark of falsehood. Genuine virility is therefore internal and refers to the spiritual. When a layman applies to join Freemasonry, he must first be "plumbed", an operation analogous to that which every Mason carries out at every moment with himself, observing the distance between his centre and the centre of his state of being; his freedom will be expressed by knowing how to distance himself from the centrifugal forces which lead him to dispersion and identification with what is becoming, and by knowing how to join the energies which refer him to the centre, whole and peerless Unity.

In the Lodge, the 2nd V. rules by the plumb line and is directly responsible for the instruction of the Brother Apprentices, for it is from the very foundations that the building of the Temple must rise uprightly; without a perfectly upwardly oriented base, no growth is possible. The 1st V. rules by level and is directly responsible for the instruction of the Brother Companions. In this degree, the initiate, passing from the perpendicular to the level, expresses his realisation from the knowledge of celestial activity, that is to say, he can embody in the horizontal of his vital action, "rajas" in the Hindu tradition, the intuited vertical.

The level is actually a plumb line suspended from the apex of a structure. Its function is to mark the horizontal, but to do so it is necessary that the vertical crosses the midpoint of its base, i.e. the level not only presupposes the plumb line, but contains it and is its result. It is impossible to know whether a straight line is really horizontal by itself, it may appear to be so and yet be slanted, inclined towards any particular aspect or tendency; the only way to verify its horizontality is to verify that the plumb line crosses it at its midpoint, i.e. at its centre, fertilising it and thus making it generous and beautiful, a reflection of Truth.

The Mason will therefore express himself by being aware of the axis that animates him, aspiring to achieve the union of both instruments, a synthesis that in fact only the perfect square, the attribute of the V.M., the Christic centre of the cross where expressions and tensions are resolved, the abode of Peace and Silence, can achieve.

* * * Spring

and Easter

These days we are witnessing the birth of spring, fullness and exuberance of forms, blossoming and a splendour of light. In ancient Greece, after the equinox, Dionysus was worshipped and the initiates abandoned themselves, like nature itself, to a jubilant intoxication, which was considered to be a state of true divine possession.

This contrasts sharply with the darkness and apparent gloom of Christian Easter, its drama and temporary despondency reminding us of the darkness that necessarily shrouds any change of state.

The Mason recognises in both extremes the Way, contemplates their complementarity, seeing in passion concentrated at a point of maximum contradiction, rest, and in death a joyful expansion.

Easter, "the passage", teaches us the narrow and at the same time immensely free path of Love. Fullness and extinction are one and the same thing. The mysteries of life, death and resurrection are one and the same mystery.

Passover means "passage or transit" in Hebrew, and the symbolic resonance these words have for us is undeniable, for they clearly allude to the idea of passing or going from one place to another, which is also the meaning of initiation, conceived as a passage or pilgrimage from "darkness to light", or from ignorance of principles and their universal laws to knowledge and conformity to them. This idea is also present in Freemasonry, and the various initiatory degrees that make up its structure have "words of passage", thanks to which, and to the knowledge of what they mean, we can "make new progress" in the order, which must necessarily coincide with our own inner realisation.

In the Jewish and Christian traditions, so present in Freemasonry, Easter is the rite par excellence of "renewal", both in terms of the annual and cosmic cycle (as it coincides with the Spring equinox and therefore with the regeneration of the whole of nature), and in terms of the spiritual, as this "renewal" is nothing other than the "passage" from a conditioned state to a truly free and unconditioned one. And this is experienced at different levels of oneself during the initiatory process (subject to the alchemical "dissolutions" and "coagulations"), but always the result of this "passage" will represent the liberation from certain conditioning and limitations, until Unity is finally realised, and with it total and permanent Liberation.

It is therefore important, Dear Brethren, that our Lodge celebrates tonight the memory of the Paschal rite, and that this coincides with a time when the Lodge itself is also in a process of "passage" and "renewal", as one cycle of itself has been completed and another is opening in which new possibilities must be manifested and developed, always in the Name and to the Glory of the Supreme Architect, which will make it (and with it all of us) progress in the "ways that have been traced out for us". Only in this way will the Lodge be a refuge in which the Brethren carry out their work and studies "under cover" from the profane world, protected by the ideas that Tradition conveys to us through symbols and rites, and really living what is meant by Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, which is, by the way, much more than mere "comradeship". And for this it is essential that each one knows his "rightful place and place", for it is from there that the Lodge will truly reflect the harmony of the cosmic order, itself a reflection of the Beauty, Intelligence and Wisdom of the Great Architect of the Universe.

* * *

More about Easter

Passover, in Hebrew Pesah, means "passing over". The Hebrew people had inherited from the Pueb nomads the rite of Passover, by which the cyclical renewal of the cosmos and the departure of the flocks to the summer pastures on the day following the full moon of the first lunar month after the vernal equinox was actualised. The first-born of the flock were slaughtered on the same night and their blood sprinkled on the huts as an act of purification and safeguard against the dangers threatening the community. Afterwards, the meat of the lambs was eaten in a ritual meal and a ritual jumping dance was performed to symbolise the "passing over". It was thus a festival of "transit" and thus of cyclical renewal of the cosmos.

It was at the time of the feast of Pesah that God's chosen people left Egypt at God's command. The event is recounted in Exodus with the announcement of the tenth plague that the people of Egypt will suffer as follows:

"And YHWH said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 'This month shall be for you the beginning of months... on the tenth day of this month you shall each take for himself a small cattle... the animal shall be without blemish, a male, a year old... you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, and the whole assembly of the congregation of the Israelites shall slaughter it between the two lights. Then they shall take the blood and anoint the two doorposts and the lintel of the house where they eat it. On the same night they shall take the flesh. You shall eat it roasted, roasted with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (...) you shall leave nothing until the morning, what is left over at dawn you shall burn (...) thus shall you eat it: with your waist girded, your feet shod, and the staff in your hands; and you shall eat it in haste. It is YHWH's passover. I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn of the land of Egypt (...) the blood shall be your token in the houses where you dwell, when I see the blood I will pass over you, and there shall be no exterminating plague among you (...) this shall be a memorial day for you, and you shall keep it as a feast in honour of YHWH from generation to generation. You shall decree that it shall be a feast forever."

YHWH caused the tenth plague to fall upon Egypt by allowing the people of Israel to be saved on the occasion of Pesah. Likewise Christ died on the occasion of the Passover. The Jewish Passover thus prepared the Christian Passover: Christ, the Lamb of God, is slain on the Cross and eaten at the Supper on the Jewish Passover, which is Holy Week. He thus brings about the salvation of the world (its cyclical renewal), and this act of redemption becomes the centre of the Christian liturgy and becomes the fundamental dogma of the faith. Like the lambs slain in sacrifice, whose bones were not to be broken, he was only wounded, and from the wound flowed blood and water, thus fulfilling the scriptures and the word of YHWH, as related by the Baptist who also says "Behold the Lamb of God, behold the one who takes away the sins of the world".

But unlike the Hebrew lamb, the Lamb of God, sacrificed at the Christian Passover, rises from the dead and brings salvation to the world: Christ is manna: "...the bread of God which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world"; he is water: "...whoever thirsts, let him come to me and drink"; he is light: "...I am the light of the world"; he is life, way and truth: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me". Let us remember that a Lamb sits in the centre of the heavenly Jerusalem and that in the Apocalypse Christ is always referred to as the Lamb who with his blood fulfils the saving function. The action of the Lamb is thus solar and luminous and is assimilated by Guénon to the Vedic god of fire Agni.

Passion, death and resurrection are the successive and simultaneous stages of the initiatory path. With sacrifice the world is recreated, by virtue of the fact that sacrificed and sacrificer are identified with each other and with the act of sacrifice itself. The blood that flows from the sacrificed body fertilises the earth, which we could see here as the heart. All myths that speak of a sacrifice by virtue of which the world is recreated, such as the myth of Attis among the Latins, that of Adonis among the Greeks, that of Tammuz in the Middle Eastern tradition, called the "Universally Great" and many others, bring forth from the earth fertilised by the blood a god of finite perfection who in turn is sacrificed and thus returned to the primordial unity. In the myths this sacrifice takes the form of a castration of the virile part of a hermaphroditic goddess, like Cybele in

the myth of Attis who, on being castrated by Dionysus by order of Olympus, emanated a stream of blood that fertilised the earth, from which a pomegranate sprang forth and, landing on Nana's lap, fertilised her, and from this miraculous conception Atis was born, a being of extraordinary beauty who castrated himself in a fit of madness provoked by Cybele, thus returning to the primordial Unity from which he had come. Castration symbolises the domination of the yetsyriatic world by Atsiluth whose blood fertilises Asiyah so that the manifested is reborn or cyclically renewed. But all this would not be possible without the "divine will", designated in the myths as the "will of the Olympian world" and in the Bible in the sense that Christ came to earth to fulfil prophecy, the Holy Scriptures, that which is revealed by God, His Law. In Hindu esotericism this fact is told through the sacrifice of Purusha by the Devas who are nothing but parts of himself. It is thus a self-sacrifice; Christ goes willingly to passion and death because in Him sacrificer and sacrifice coincide, for it is proper for the Avatar to descend into the order of the manifested, to assume human form, and by sacrifice to restore the cyclic order.

Easter thus celebrates the mystery of redemption in its two aspects, death and resurrection. Easter death is experienced cyclically by every initiate and is part of the simultaneity in which the different states of being occur.

* * * * *

Some considerations that depend on the "three vertices of the initiatory triangle".

Faith, hope and charity are not human virtues. They are divine, gifts of the Holy Spirit, which is why they are "theological", that is, they have to do with the knowledge of the Godhead, direct or indirect.

Pride, which by coagulating is individualising, or vice versa, cannot accede to it, by referring to the square, or even to the cube, for these are limiting with respect to the circle or the sphere in the three-dimensional, , in the non-extensive, the centre is on the contrary that which contains all the parts, or all the extensions of itself, which are included in it and which are, if like, only the prolongations of its reduction to an image by the reflex and individual mind.

However, this squared reality is the affirmation of a reality that always coincides with another reality only symbolically in a point, which is neither one nor the other, and which therefore is and is not a point, or which, when it belongs to effective verticality, it is because it has reduced to itself all the horizontal extension that comes from its dual reflection.

Freedom. This is the natural (or primordial) human state.

All that a traditional people does is to gain, to preserve or maintain, its freedom, that is, the freedom of those who (and of everyone who) constitute that people. Those who possess the greatest degree of freedom are the metaphysical, that is, the spiritually realised, by the effective knowledge of the Principle and metaphysical Identity, that is, by the knowledge of the Totality, that is, of the Whole, of the Universal Possibility, or Infinity, the Non-finite. That which will never pass away, nor change form, because it does not depend upon time and possesses no form, which does not prevent its revelation, for on the contrary it is that which (or that which) constitutes the Archetypal World or Cosmos.

In that case Non-Being is more than being. Everything is better as Non-Being, it is more perfect. Being is one of its possibilities, or aspects. Fundamental, for it is through Him that the Cosmos is ordered, or is. Which is not only the product of a 'positive' affirmation but also of a 'negative' possibility.

Being, as Word, "which is Word in the 'outer' and Thought in the 'inner'" is formulation of itself, i.e. itself revealing itself, i.e. making itself explicit and concealing itself, simultaneously 'being' and 'not being', as the sun itself manifests, and also truly all the planets, or stars, direct lights of the Logos. Each with four planes of reading, without confusion.

The symbol of the cross (vertical-horizontal) is then wholly universal, and the symbol of the world, not that of the first form, which is the ternary, (or even the binary brought back to unity, from which it has not departed), or universal 'Intelligence'. Intelligence as a principle, recognised or unrecognised, indicated or unrecognised, in the secret testimony of the spirit, or soul of the initiate.

So the rite is an audition, and that is why it is a rite, or a symbol in action. A reality known only to the One who invented it. By "the one invents himself: God".

MASONRY

LIVING TRADITION OF THE WEST *

FRANCISCO ARIZA

The title of this conference stems from a certainty: that Freemasonry is not a relic of the past, outdated and alien to the reality of today's men and women, but that it is a tradition that is alive and that preserves in its ideas all the intellectual power capable of providing answers to the essential questions that, today as yesterday, continue to be asked by those who themselves and wish to embark on a path in search of their true identity. "Know !" exclaims the ancient Socratic dictum, and which Freemasonry makes its own as one of the mottos that best defines its main objective and very *raison d'être*.

It is clear that it is these ideas, conveyed by symbolic codes, which give real "strength and vigour" to Freemasonry. Moreover, as we shall see, these ideas have also played an active role in the history of the West, especially from the moment it began to take shape during the first centuries of our era, to which the whole cultural heritage of Classical Antiquity has made a decisive contribution. In this sense, we must remember that from its origins, Freemasonry has belonged to a much wider sphere: that of the Hermetic Tradition, which is in turn part of the Unanimous Tradition, also known as the Perennial Philosophy, terms which express very well the idea of a Knowledge present uninterruptedly in all peoples and civilisations throughout history, and which constitutes

an ordered series of interrelated knowledge, of a doctrine (never a dogma), capable of explaining to people their own nature and that of the world in which they live.¹

We can therefore say that these civilisations have existed thanks to this Knowledge and the knowledge derived from it, which have shaped the very idea of culture, as we can appreciate by studying, and above all by understanding, the conception of the world (i.e. cosmogony and metaphysics) that they have left us through the sacredness of their symbolic codes, their rites and founding myths.

Freemasonry also has its symbols, its rites and its myths, all of which in fact make up a conception of the world and of man based fundamentally on the Constructive Art, interwoven with the other disciplines that make up the core of Hermeticism: Alchemy, Theurgy, Natural Magic and Astrology-Astronomy, also called the Science of Cycles and Rhythms, without forgetting the different currents of thought that came from the Mystery Religions, Pythagoreanism, Neoplatonism, Jewish and Christian Gnosis and the heritage of ancient Egyptian wisdom, were established, under the invocation of the god Hermes, in the Alexandria of the first centuries of our era, and from which would emerge the ideas-force that have made possible the development of Western culture in its widest expression, and which far from being extinguished with the arrival of the materialistic sciences that have generated the modern world, continue to be in force through different institutions, groups and people, linked in one way or another with the Tradition of Hermes.

There is no doubt that Freemasonry today constitutes one of those institutions, and although it was born in its present form in the 18th century, it nevertheless bears within it the deep imprint left by the ancient traditions of builders, as witnessed by many of its symbols, including geometric symbols and those specifically related to building, such as the compass, the square, the level, the plumb line, etc. There is also a whole ritual code linked to this symbolism, and of course the names of its three grades (apprentice, companion and master) undoubtedly reveal a craft and trade origin. Moreover, initiatory work itself retains in Freemasonry a collective and group character, which is perfectly expressed in the so-called "chain of union".

This heritage is no small thing, bearing in mind that these same corporations of builders were also heirs, by different routes, of those that were known throughout the length and breadth of the Mediterranean basin, and especially of those that existed in Egypt and the Near East (on this see the SYMBOLOS web page "Astronomical Symbolism in Near Eastern Architecture" by Adrian Snodgrass).

As we know, the great Egyptian civilisation was in its last period a contemporary of the Greco-Latin civilisation, and it is well known how much the latter owes to Egypt, whose millenary knowledge was felt in the most important

Greek philosophers, especially Pythagoras and Plato, from whom most of the ideas that helped to shape the worldview of Western culture were to emerge. Let us remember that Pythagoras, heir, like Plato, to the Orphic tradition of purely Greek roots, was also initiated by the Egyptian priests, with whom he spent many years participating fully in the teachings emanating from Thoth-Hermes (i.e. from Wisdom), for as we know, those priests were the ones who preserved and transmitted the Sacred Science revealed by that Deity, architecture being precisely one of its most important and significant expressions, as we can see in the case of the pyramids and other monuments that continue to defy the passage of time.

Precisely the ideas used by the builders of Classical Antiquity are largely linked to the teachings of the Pythagoreans, that is to say to the Sciences of Number and Geometry, as is the case, for example, with the Roman *collegia fabrorum*, who survived as such until the dawn of the Middle Ages, especially in Byzantium and northern Italy, when they became Christianised, thus inaugurating a new cycle but preserving and spreading through the Constructive Art the essence of their secular inheritance. In this respect, it would be useful to refer to a medieval legend spread among English-speaking builders' guilds, according to which a certain Peter Gower, originally from Greece, brought to the Anglo-Saxon countries certain knowledge relating to the Art of Building. Some authors, among them René Guénon, claim that this personage, Peter Gower, was none other than Pythagoras himself, or rather, the sciences of Number and Geometry, which were introduced into the British Isles through the builders' guilds at the same time as they were introduced throughout the continent, especially in France and the Germanic countries. Precisely in Great Britain these guilds also assimilated the cosmogony of the traditions of the local builders of Celtic origin and belonging to a lineage that went back to those Neolithic cultures (more or less direct heirs of the Atlantean civilisation) that built Stonehenge and other prehistoric constructions, some of whose remains (such as Stonehenge itself) reveal a high knowledge of astronomy and the laws that govern the Cosmos in its subtle and physical reality.

And since we are talking about Pythagoras and Plato, we must bear in mind that in ancient civilisations the names of people, whether historical or legendary, often designate the knowledge they conveyed rather than the people themselves, and which was often transmitted through the schools or confraternities they founded. This is also true of the Pythagorean Euclid, one of the heads of the Mathematical School of Alexandria in the 3rd century BC, who is mentioned in the "Old Charges" of the medieval Freemasons as the "father" of Geometry, and it is emphasised that this does not designate anything but Freemasonry itself.²

And while we are on the subject of the Old Charges, we must say that they constitute a series of manuscripts originating in English and Scottish Masonry, the earliest of which appear towards the end of the Middle Ages (the Regius and the Cooke in particular) and the latest towards the eighteenth century (the Graham and the Dumfries), a period of some three hundred years during which the change of Craft Masonry into speculative Freemasonry took place. These manuscripts contain above all a legendary history of the Masonic fraternity, a history which deals mainly with the "first origin of Geometry", while also highlighting the other sciences and liberal arts. Mention is made of its mythical and antediluvian founders (Cain, Seth, Henoch, Lamech, Jabel, Jubal, Tubalcain, Naomi, Noah) and of that lineage of gods, sages and philosophers (Hermes, Henoch, Lamech, Jabel, Jubal, Tubalcain, Tubalcain, Noah, Noah),

Pythagoras, Euclid), patriarchs (Abraham), kings (Nimrod, David, Solomon, Hiram of Tyre, Charles Martel, Athelstan, Edwind), historical and legendary craftsmen (Hiram, Adoniram, Ammon, Naymus Grecus), and so many others who have passed on the Sacred Science down through the ages and who constitute the authentic "golden chain" of the Masonic Order, in which the memory of a much more ancient origin (as ancient as Geometry) survives. And it is precisely so that this memory would not be lost that what was previously transmitted orally was put down in writing (through the Old Charges and other documents of continental Freemasonry)³. In this transmission, whether oral or written, the sacred history of the Order was conveyed, as we have said, and formed part of the teaching received by those who had just entered the Craft. In this sense, there is evidence that the custom of reading the Old Charges to the new Mason was common in medieval and Renaissance times, and continued to be so during the 18th century, as attested to by Anderson's own Constitutions, which explicitly state the obligation to read them to the recipient as an integral part of the rite of initiation.

In this sense we must say that history is also a symbolic, a code of signs and significant facts through which our ancestors, of whatever epoch and civilisation, were able to gain knowledge of higher realities. When taken in this way, history also reveals cosmogony and becomes a support for accessing the supra-historical and metaphysical. As an anonymous Freemason of a couple of centuries ago, author of *The True Children of Light*, put it:

We do not live in historical, profane time, but in sacred time.

Or as the Taoist sage Chuang-Tsu, quoted by René Guénon, also said:

Historical truth itself is only valid when it is derived from the Principle.

But when that Principle, which is the Great Architect of the Universe, is ignored or regarded as an entelechy unrelated to the life and destiny of mankind and civilisations, then history itself, and ultimately all things, become a patchwork of scattered and disordered fragments lacking the true unity that metaphysical and symbolic knowledge provides.

Returning again to the medieval builders, we have to say that what they did was to "adapt" the forms of a tradition of millenary origin to another of recent origin: Christianity, which was not very difficult because Christianity itself had already "absorbed" many things from the civilisations and esoteric currents mentioned above, especially through the early Fathers of the Church, some of whom, like Dionysius Areopagite, had already "absorbed" many things from the civilisations and esoteric currents mentioned above, especially through the early Fathers of the Church,

Origen, Clement of Alexandria and Saint Augustine achieved the synthesis between Christian spirituality and the tradition of Hermes, Pythagoras and Plato, a synthesis from which would emerge the ideas that would later be used by medieval architects, first in the Romanesque (so called because it directly inspired by the Roman *collegia fabrorum*), and later in the Gothic. In this context we should not forget Boethius, one of the last representatives of the Platonic Academy in Athens in the 5th and 6th centuries, to which the most illustrious Neoplatonists (Proclus at the head) of the first centuries of our era had belonged. The most important contribution of Boethius, author of *The Consolation of Philosophy*, was his studies on astronomy, geometry, arithmetic and music, i.e. the sciences and arts of Number, Measurement, Harmony and Rhythm, essential in architecture and constructive symbolism. All this was received by the medieval philosophers who were called to be the true continuators of this knowledge, disseminated through their works and the different schools they founded all over Europe (Chartres and Oxford among the most outstanding), and in which the study of Plato's *Timaeus* was very important, which is by the way his most Pythagorean book, and where the Organisation of the Cosmos is described on the basis of principles of numerical and geometric order, those that unite and underlie the creative discourse in any of its manifestations. It is precisely from there that the image of the Creator God, the Orderer of the World, was drawn, clothed with the attributes of an architect, with a compass in his hand tracing the limits of the cosmos, as we can see in so many engravings of the time.

* * *

When we said above that the Roman *collegia fabrorum* became Christianised, we meant that they took on the Christian heritage, or to be more precise, the Judeo-Christian heritage: the Judeo-Christian heritage, since the medieval civilisation is fundamentally Judeo-Christian, and the guilds of builders were no strangers to this reality, to the point that cathedrals and other buildings were built with their symbolic model in the Temple of Solomon, a fact that we can consider as crucial in the later history of Freemasonry and in Western esotericism in general. Indeed, the medieval builders, in taking Solomon's Temple as their symbolic model, also became the heirs of the builders who built that Temple, which is in turn an image of the Heavenly Jerusalem, that is, the Mythical City described by Ezekiel and later by St. John, but whose origin is essentially timeless and directly linked to a spiritual genealogy (the mythical and historical ancestors, inhabitants of the "Eternal East") which in this case goes beyond a specific tradition (such as the Judeo-Christian one), going back to the very origin of humanity.

All traditional civilisations have been born and developed according to the idea of a celestial and sacred origin of their culture, an idea permanently reiterated by their cosmogonic and metaphysical symbols, their rites and myths. In this respect, Federico González says in *Los Símbolos Precolombinos*:

The celestial city is a different space, a country that coexists with our own, a homeland of spiritual body where the gods and the dead dwell. (...) What the celestial city is to the spatial symbol, the genealogies, or ancestors, are to the temporal, and both converge to cement reality and tribal life. They coexist in the Platonic world of Ideas and form the archetype. (...) Almost all traditions have felt that they are inherited on this earth from that city of heaven and descendants of its dwellers, and of

There they invariably thought of their homeland as the centre of the world, that is, as a specially 'cosmised' place where the energies of heaven and earth, of the living and the dead, came together to allow the development of life and of that community in time. (...) The great myths and legends always refer to cosmogonic genesis through which existence is explained and order and meaning are found in the instability of becoming. Cosmogony is always actual, just like time, and is continually regenerating itself; in the eternity of the present, the past and the future are abolished. The celestial city and the ancestors are here and now, and man a permanent link between two realities, or worlds. By the ritual reiteration of the ancestral myth and through the symbols that reveal it, the passage from the known to the unknown can be effected. This is the purpose of all teaching and the reason for the secrets of the craft.⁴

The worldview of a traditional society, however archaic and "primitive" it may , could not be better explained, or perhaps because of it, since the ancient and archaic is not to be confused with the old and outdated but is rather related to the old and outdated.

with all that is perennial and reflects universal ideas or archetypes (...) In this sense the ancient is perfectly current.⁵

And if we extrapolate this centre of the world mentioned above to the Middle Ages, and later to the Renaissance, we see that it is none other than the Temple of Jerusalem itself, or the Temple of Solomon, image of the Celestial City, and it is precisely the Idea that promotes this City that really drives the builders to carry out their work, leaving the imprint of their Art and Science engraved on the stone of the Romanesque and Gothic cathedral, and thus shaping in them a cosmogony woven of permanent relations between the natural and the supernatural world, between the physical and the metaphysical world, the symbol being the intermediary between the two and the one that makes their union possible in the mind and heart of man.

There, engraved on the walls, columns, capitals, tympanums and vaults, we see the three kingdoms of nature represented: The mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, as well as the world of man and the intermediate plane, populated by fabulous beings, gods and heroes, and which also includes the various planetary heavens and the zodiac, topped off by the angelic hierarchies and powers that surround the throne where the Deity, the Pantocrator, the Lord of the World, dwells. In truth the work of the Medieval architect is a book of hermetic images and symbols which show us the structure of the Cosmos and the various planes or levels of which it is composed, from the densest and coarsest to the subtlest, which also live in man, so that he always has the opportunity to access them and to know them in himself, which is the same as identification with the Universal Being or Great Architect of Heaven and Earth.

That is why among the ancient builders (and we are not only referring to Westerners, but to those of all civilisations), who were immersed in a "sacralised cosmos", the process of building, the execution of the work, acquired an essentially ritual character. This is obvious in temples and sacred precincts, although this character also extended to the dwelling, where the practical was perfectly combined with its symbolic significance, far from being conceived as "machines of habitation" (as claimed by Le Corbusier, one of the fathers of modern architecture), their structure always had a cosmic significance, just like the temples, which in this respect differed little from dwellings.⁶ In , according to the conception of the ancient builders, the whole building, whether house or temple, had to represent the Cosmos in its totality, that is to say, the different worlds that make it up: the terrestrial world, the intermediary world and the celestial world, in such a way that it was truly a symbolic image created "according to the order" established by the Supreme Architect, also called the "Spirit of Universal Construction".

These same builders were perfectly aware of the cosmic structure and attached enormous value to the sciences and arts that reveal it, among which Geometry, the "science of measurement", stands out, to be understood not only in its quantitative aspect but above all in its qualitative aspect, which is particularly linked to the symbolism of "light" (so closely related to Geometry), since by means of its luminous rays it measures the totality of realised space, and, at the same time as it illuminates them, it manifests the things it contains, hence light has always been taken as a symbol of the cosmogonic act par excellence. Let us recall, without going any further, the Fiat Lux of Genesis. In this sense, the process of construction follows the guidelines set by the God the Architect, or God the Geometer, in the elaboration of the Cosmic Plan arising from his Thought and manifested through his Intelligence (which made everything in "measure, number and weight" according to the biblical verse), which is precisely what the human builder has to embody and imitate in his work. And both, the process of construction and the process of creation of the World, are reflected in the alchemical process of transmutation that man carries out with himself, so that Sacred Geometry truly expresses those guidelines, laws and principles that constitute the intellectual guide that orders the unfolding of that inner process, which previously needs a "raw material" on which to "work" or "work", "material" that actualises all its possibilities thanks to the constant presence of the subtle fire of love and the passion for Knowledge.

One way of transmitting the teaching of the Constructive Art was through the lapidary signs, i.e. the marks engraved in stone. Through these signs the ancient Masons and fellow builders effectively wanted to transmit a series of concepts and ideas related to the knowledge of cosmogony, its principles and fundamental laws, embodied in geometrical forms. In reality all the lapidary signs can be reduced to a few fundamental schemes: the circle, the line (axis), the spiral, the square, the triangle and the cross. From them all the other signs are generated (and also the design of the very tools that were used for the construction: mallet, chisel, plumb line, level, square, trowel, compass, etc.), and all together they form a code or symbolic language that constitutes the "key" to understand the deep meaning of the very construction carried out according to the cosmic model. Thus, the lapidary signs are closely linked to the architecture, which in the represents nothing more than the complete development of the ideas expressed through these signs, or symbols.

From Byzantium to Ireland, fellow travellers have left on the stone their speaking signature in the form of lapidary signs (...). This signature constituted in short the reduced image of a building plan built on its directing circle, according to this 'art of geometry', one of the seven liberal arts, taught in the monastic universities and from which a metaphysics was built. By engraving his sign the companion not only 'justified' his identity, but also his quality and his knowledge.⁷

On the other hand, the very act of engraving the signs on the stone was considered a rite, perhaps due to the very fact that this, the rite, is nothing but the symbol in action, i.e. acting, and the symbolic tracing itself is, in turn, the fixation of a ritual gesture. Precisely, the origin of this gesture lies in the very act of the Great Architect creating the cosmos, so that construction appears then as a true "imitation" of this same act, or intelligent gesture, which is also the origin of all true art, whatever it may be, but which will always have as its essential aim to bring our being into harmony with the rhythm of the world, the source of all life and the dynamic expression of the primordial Unity. Let us bear in mind, in this regard, that the ancient architects and master builders did not use detailed plans of the building to be constructed as we do today. These were much simpler, often reduced to drawings of the various parts of the building. The latter, in its essential aspects, was the projection to the exterior of a subtle image conceived in the mind and spirit of the architect, and the journeymen in charge of it knew perfectly well the rules and techniques of the trade necessary for its realisation, which were revealed to them orally and understood through the repeated (and ritual) practice of that same trade.

Near, or next to the cathedrals and buildings under construction, were the lodges, where plans were drawn up, offices were distributed and the details of the work were discussed. These lodges, or workshops, were not exactly the same as today's, nor did they have the same function, although they retain the same name, but in any case what we do want to emphasise is that the work of those builders combined art and science, practice and theory, thus following the famous dictum that "art without science is nothing". The initiation into the "mysteries of the craft" was in reality an introduction to the sacredness of the symbol. For this very reason we must distinguish between the Freemason builder, who receives through his craft a conception of the world consistent with the principles of universal order transmitted through the esoteric tradition, and the other who knows only the most external aspects of this craft, thus ignoring the deep meaning of the Constructive Art, and is therefore unable to realise or operate in himself the ideas derived from this Art. For this reason it has also been called the "Real Art", identical with the "Great Work" of Alchemy, for in this "Great Work" is expressed, as we have said above, the model of the initiatory process, which, divided into the three degrees of apprentice, companion and master, reproduces stage by stage the complete development from "darkness to light", or from "chaos to order".

It is therefore not surprising that alongside the builders, we find the wise alchemists, who were also astrologers, magicians and theurgists, perfect

They were connoisseurs of the sciences of nature applied as living symbols of the initiatory and regenerative process. They endowed cathedrals and other civil buildings with numerous symbols based on the correspondences and analogies between the macrocosm and the microcosm, thus following the maxim of Hermes Trismegistus: "that which is below is like that which is above and that which is above is like that which is below". The "rough stone" that the Masons polished and carved for building purposes represented the same as the "raw material" of the alchemists: the foundation and essence of the whole Work; whether it was the architectural work through its transformation into the cubic stone, or the inner work through its transformation into the "philosopher's stone", the alchemical name for the attainment of Knowledge.⁸

A construction made with that Art that transfigures matter and makes it a permanent symbol of Beauty (which, as Plato said, is the "splendour of the true"), is generated from a central point, which is in turn the "trace" of an invisible vertical axis, but whose presence is omnipresent throughout the temple. This central point is none other than the "vital knot" that binds the entire building together, and where the whole structure of the building converges and expands, as if breathing. This knot was well known to the master builders, who saw its reflection in the navel, the symbolic seat of the "vital centre" of the temple-human body. This subtle structure of the cosmos-cathedral, imperceptible to the ordinary senses, is nevertheless perceived through intellectual intuition and the visible forms of heaven and earth, which are symbolised in the building by the hemispherical vault and the quadrangular or rectangular base, respectively.

Naturally, the construction of the cathedral involved not only the Masons but also many other craft guilds: carpenters, sculptors, weavers, painters, glaziers, smiths, etc., who also had their symbols and rites as well as their trade secrets, which also possessed their symbols and rites as well as their secrets of the trade, being grouped within the so-called Fellowship, so closely related to Freemasonry, to the point that, as René Guénon states, at one time both constituted a single tradition, and we would add a single art: the Constructive Art in its various expressions.

In all these arts and crafts a single language was spoken: The symbolic, which was christened the "language of Oc" (i.e. the "language of the birds", which explains its aerial and subtle character), which also involved the tradition of the minstrels and troubadours through song, music and poetry, and of course the various orders of Christian chivalry more or less closely linked to Hermeticism,⁹ not forgetting the various schools which, like those already mentioned at Oxford and Chartres, also took up the heritage of the Pythagorean-Platonic tradition and the Alexandrian gnosis. In these schools, in the heat of which the universities flourished thanks to the development of scholasticism, the Liberal Arts were also taught, divided into the trivium (the arts of the letter and the word) and the quadrivium (the arts of number and geometry). As we have said on several occasions, the latter (arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy) are directly related to architecture, and were therefore perfectly familiar to the builders, although of course they were well aware that the Cosmos was also the writing and speech, the Logos, of the Great Architect.

* * *

The perennial voice of Sacred Science did not die out in the West, although it did suffer a certain weakening due to the period of relative obscurity that followed the end of the Middle Ages (dating from the 14th century), a situation that is typical of all periods of transition. In fact, this period saw the appearance of the nefarious Inquisition and with it the persecution of the followers of true esotericism by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which gradually distanced itself from the salvific message proclaimed in the Gospel texts, a distancing that has certainly not ceased to occur until the present day.

But the arrival of the Renaissance, in the middle of the 15th century, inaugurated a new cycle that would bring new perspectives and possibilities to the development of hermetic and esoteric ideas, which would be reflected in the different aspects of Renaissance culture, and of course the building trade adapted to the new times, benefiting (as in the Middle Ages) from these same ideas by putting them into practice through the Constructive Art.

We must also bear in mind that during the Renaissance, the Church, as an institution, no longer intervened so much in the direction of the work of the builders, who also recovered the architectural forms of Classical Antiquity, in keeping with the tone and cultural atmosphere of the time. Indeed, as Federico González tells us in his work *Hermetismo y Masonería*:

Although Freemasonry, as we have seen repeatedly, has its origins in the medieval stone masons, and therefore in the religious rigidities of the conceptions of that time, it should not be forgotten that from that time until the eighteenth century, where it takes its speculative form, these builders lived immersed in a new world, that of the Renaissance, inspired by the Corpus Hermeticum, Pythagoreanism (also the Orphic Hymns and the Chaldean Oracles) and above all by Plato, the Neoplatonists and Proclus, which is reflected in their palaces, churches, gardens and towers, interior architecture, mechanical devices and other wonders of natural magic and scientific and artistic experimentation (paintings, sculptures, goldsmiths and furniture) which had their origin in the Medici Academy, directed by Marsilio Ficino, whose influence spread throughout Europe for almost three centuries, and which was certainly present in Elizabethan England and its successors, leading not coincidentally, and just to name one example, to the translation of the Corpus Hermeticum by Sir Walter Scott, a master mason, at the same time as the English lodges burst into modern history.¹⁰

In fact, throughout the Renaissance and up to the 18th century, the ideas of the Hermetic philosophers and Christian Kabbalists were reflected in the construction carried out by the craftsmen's guilds, whose architects, master builders and workmen were enlightened men who were perfectly familiar with the tradition of Hermes, Pythagoras and Plato, and were therefore versed in the most diverse disciplines, arts and sciences. An example of Renaissance architects linked to Hermetic ideas is the Frenchman Filiberto de l'Orme (16th century). A connoisseur of the work of the Hermetic philosophers, Christian Kabbalists and Neoplatonists (in his written work he mentions Orpheus, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Noah, Moses, Solomon, Ezekiel, Marsilio Ficino, etc.), de l'Orme applied the principles derived from the Hermetic ideas to architecture.

correspondences and analogies between the macrocosm and the microcosm, between the subtle world and the corporeal world, from whose permanent interrelation the Harmony of the World is born. This is the reason why he considered architecture as an image of this Harmony and as a compendium of all the cosmogonic arts and sciences, and also why the builder must not only possess the purely technical knowledge of the trade, but must also be experienced in Astronomy, Astrology, Music, History, Mathematics, Philosophy, Painting, Medicine, etc. De l'Orme is thus a Renaissance architect who, like so many others, was influenced intellectually by Hermes in the application of his Art.

The works of Marsilio Ficino (including his translations and commentaries on the Corpus Hermeticum and the works of Plato), Pico della Mirandola (Heptaplus, Discourse on the Dignity of Man), Cornelius Agrippa (The Occult Philosophy), Francesco Giorgi (De Harmonia Mundi), Johannes Reuchlin (De Arte Cabalistica and The Wonderful Word), William Postel (De Orbis Terrae Concordia, The Bond of the World), Giordano Bruno (Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast, The Supper of Ashes), John Dee (The Hieroglyphic Monad), among so many others, exerted a great influence on intellectual circles throughout Europe, and paved the way for the emergence of the Rosicrucian movement in the early 17th century, which would play a major role in the development of speculative Freemasonry.

Robert Fludd (Metaphysical History of the Macrocosm and Microcosm), Michel Maier (Fugitive Atalanta), Henry Khunrath (Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom), John Valentin Andreae (The Chemical Marriage of Christian Rosencreutz, Christianopolis), Comenius, Solomon de Caus etc., are some distinguished representatives of this Christian hermetic and cabalist current, which was also closely linked to various orders of chivalry, more or less direct heirs of those that existed during the Middle Ages. In this regard, we would like to point out the fact that certain authors (among them René Guénon) consider the Rosicrucian current (Hermetic, alchemical and Christian Kabbalistic) to be the direct ancestor of speculative Freemasonry, or "philosophical" as some prefer to call it. According to these same authors, speculative Freemasonry is the direct consequence of the "fusion" of Rosicrucian Hermeticism with the builders' confraternities, i.e. what converged at the birth of modern Freemasonry was nothing less than the very tradition of the West, "protected" and "sheltered" thereafter in the bosom of Masonic lodges and temples.

It is undeniable that this 'fusion' between Rosicrucian Hermeticism and the tradition of the builders was born in England and Scotland, and therefore lived relatively 'isolated' from the religious, political and social turbulence that was sweeping the European continent at the time (early 17th century), and which reached its peak during the Thirty Years' War. Indeed, as a consequence of this war, which devastated half of Europe and which in a way marks the cyclical moment of a change of era, many of the Hermetic and Rosicrucian adepts had to leave the continent and settle in the British Isles, where there was still a certain tolerance towards Hermetic ideas, a tolerance that would never really disappear from the land of Albion. In fact almost all those who entered the English and Scottish lodges, and who were not people of the building trade, belonged to or were in one way or another connected with the Rosicrucian movement and the various Hermetic currents still in existence; or else they belonged to the nobility, and therefore linked, to a greater or lesser degree, to those orders of chivalry which we mentioned above as also linked with Hermeticism. This is the case of Elias Ashmole, who is in a certain sense the paradigm of the Mason not directly linked to the building trade but integrated into Hermeticism.¹²

Thanks to this isolation and "cover", "fusion" of the Hermetic and Rosicrucian current with the operative Freemasons, who were also interested in establishing analogies between their craft and other arts and sciences of Cosmogony, could indeed take place. For example, the Scotsman William Schaw (author of "The Schaw Statutes", dated 1598-99, and master builder at the court of James VI) was keenly interested in the Art of Memory, which he learned from the English disciples of the Italian neo-Platonist and Hermetic master Giordano Bruno, the great disseminator of this Art in the Renaissance. But to understand the emergence of present day Freemasonry we would have to take into account:

that 17th century Masonic lodges may have been in a sense a temple of memory, an imaginary edifice containing fixed places and images helping to memorize the secrets of the Mason's Word and the rituals of initiation. William Schaw's formal recommendation for Masons to bear witness to the art of memory and the science to which it refers has been glimpsed by generations of Masonic historians but its significance has never been pointed out. And yet that recommendation gives us the key to understanding the main aspects of the origins of Freemasonry, linking the operative Mason's craft to the quests of the Hermetic magicians.¹³

The idea of the Masonic Lodge as a temple of memory is extremely suggestive, and responds exactly to the mnemonic role played by the symbols that decorate it, starting with the Lodge itself, the symbolic image of the Cosmos. The Lodge, the Temple, from the point of view of the Art of Memory, an essentially hermetic art, becomes an extremely important symbol for incipient Freemasonry, for it is within it that all the Mason's activities and rites are carried out, and where the symbols present there are studied and meditated upon. The symbols are certainly not placed there at random, but in their proper place and place to allow them to become "fixed" in the mind and to contribute to the alchemical transmutation of the mind by their identification with the Universal Intelligence, of which they are a reflection.

That is why the name "workshop" is still used to designate the Lodge or Temple, because it is there that one goes to "work", i.e. to "carve" the rough stone, which is the human soul as yet uncultivated by the symbolic Way, as proposed by Hermetic and Masonic initiation. We mean to say that from the moment when the craft of the builder, who based his architectural work on the cosmic model described in the Temple of Solomon, practically disappears, the new Freemasonry is forced to concentrate this model in the Lodge itself. It also incorporated into its rituals a sacred and mythical story with Master Hiram, the builder of Solomon's Temple, as the central character, on the understanding that this was the only way that the symbolic and doctrinal legacy received from the various esoteric currents of the West would continue to be passed on to future generations.

Let us recall in this regard that this historical period experienced by Freemasonry (16th-17th centuries) has been called a "transition", which means that the old Craft Masonry was mutating into an esoteric society capable of receiving within itself not only the heritage of symbols and rites relating to building, but also those of other initiatory organisations (including the orders of chivalry linked to Christian esotericism¹⁴) different from the tradition of builders but which were part of the same traditional universe and of the same geographical and cultural sphere.

This heritage was gradually consolidated throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries with the creation of the great Masonic Rites or Systems (Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, York Rite, Emulation Rite, etc.), which gave this initiatory organisation its current structure. It is therefore not surprising that Freemasonry has also been called the "traditional ark of symbols", which basically means that it continues to be the bearer of a spiritual influence that contributes to the continuity of "initiation into the mysteries" in contemporary society.

As Federico González reminds us again:

Freemasonry is, according to all this, the happy result of the relationship and synthesis between different forms of access to Knowledge, and the uniqueness that these forms proclaim. But it is clear that such an undertaking has not been the work of a few people, or the work of individual actions to achieve that synthesis, despite the gratitude that various personalities deserve in that regard. Freemasonry is and will remain a repository of Traditional Wisdom that bestows Knowledge on those who are capable of receiving it.¹⁵

Masonic cosmogony, integrated in Hermeticism, could therefore be seen as a support for achieving spiritual or metaphysical realisation, which is what the polar axis of the plumb line hanging from the ceiling of the Lodge points towards, indicating the zenithal exit to true Reality, for after all, the Lodge, like the Cosmos (the Great Architect's work of art), or Plato's Cave, is only the reflection of a higher, supra-cosmic and metaphysical reality, and as such is beyond the conditioning and limitations of the individual.

That is why Freemasonry today, here and now, is of incalculable value to anyone who wishes to carry out work of internal order. In the same vein, and in order to make it perhaps more "operative" in terms of its effectiveness, work with Masonic symbols should be accompanied by a knowledge of universal symbolism, or, in other words, by a comparative study of the symbols, rites and myths of other traditions, whether living or extinct, for it is all about the sapiential legacy that we human beings of this age have received from our ancestors, from any place, time and tradition.

We are convinced that this comparative study will serve to understand more deeply the Masonic symbol, rite and myth itself, which will be seen to form part of that Unanimous Tradition or Perennial Philosophy of which we spoke at the beginning. In this sense, we know that there are still lodges in different parts of the world dedicated to working on the deepening of this symbolic legacy, aware that only the understanding of the ideas contained therein can allow them to link with the essence of Freemasonry and thus to communicate with that chain of union which constitutes, as it is said in the book *Symbol, Rite, Initiation*:

...an image on the plane of the vertical chain which connects with the origins of our Order and ensures a regular transmission, through the initiates of all times, with the Great Universal Architect.¹⁶

NOTES

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Lecture given at the Arús Library in Barcelona on 10 April 2003.

1

SYMBOLOS N° 25-26: Federico González and collaborators: "Introduction to Sacred Science", p. 403-404.

2

In other manuscripts it is said that Euclid himself was a disciple of Abraham, which is a real anachronism, for Abraham lived about two thousand years before Euclid. But bearing in mind that the legends related in the "Ancient Duties" deal with sacred and mythical history, what is really meant by this legend is that Euclid (i.e. Freemasonry) was the disciple who received the knowledge that the Patriarch embodied: that of the Hebrew tradition, connected with the ancient Mesopotamian civilisations (contemporary with Egypt), for Abraham was a native of the Chaldean city of Ur. On Euclid's relationship with Abraham see Denys Roman: René Guénon et les destins de la Franc-Maçonnerie, chap XII.

3

Of Medieval Freemasonry on the Continent we must especially note the guilds and guilds of France and the Germanic countries. In the latter, the guilds were grouped under the name of the "Federation of Lodges of the Holy Empire", known as the Bauhütte, whose main centres were in Strasbourg, Cologne, Regensburg, Vienna and Berne. From these lodges came, for example, "The Statutes of Regensburg", "The Constitutions of the Freemasons of Strasbourg", "Statutes and Regulations of Bologna", etc.). However, legends alluding to the mythical and traditional history of Freemasonry are found only in the English and Scottish Old Charges.

4

Federico González: The Pre-Columbian Symbols. Cosmogony, Theogony, Culture, chap. XVIII.

5

SYMBOLOS N° 25-26, p.334.

6

Let us remember in this sense that in these civilisations the hearth of the house is equivalent to what the altar represents in the temple: a "central" place always linked to the idea of sacrifice and offering to the deity.

7

Luc Benoist: Art du Monde, part three, chap. VI.

8

Among the Christian Hermeticists of the time, numerous correspondences were made between the birth, life, passion, death and resurrection of Christ and the various stages of the Great Work of alchemy, and so it appears in many expressions of medieval and Renaissance art.

9

Among these orders of chivalry, the Temple is worth mentioning, which had very close links with the guilds of builders.

10

Hermeticism and Freemasonry, p. 139.

11

See Ibid., chap. I. About John Dee we would like to say that this hermetic master of the Elizabethan Renaissance prefaced Euclid's Elements of Geometry, a work that was the subject of study among medieval and Renaissance architects. In that Foreword Dee states that

all the mathematical arts are subordinate to architecture as their queen.

As mentioned above, in the legends of the Old Charges, the Pythagorean Euclid appears as one of the progenitors of Freemasonry.

12

On Elias Ashmole we recommend again Hermeticism and Freemasonry by Federico Gonzalez. Also The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, by Frances A. Yates.

13

Robert Stevenson: Les Origines de la Franc-Maçonnerie. Le Siècle Ecossais 1590-1710, p. 138-139.

14

Concerning the vestiges of chivalric initiations within Freemasonry, here is what André Bachelet tells us in his article "The Living Ark of Symbols. Freemasonry and the end of the cycle", which appeared in SYMBOLOS N° 19-20:

... the constitution of the Scottish 'high degrees' and Anglo-Saxon side degrees represents a form of arrangement and restitution whose importance is certainly not sufficiently appreciated. And it is certainly worth remembering at this juncture that the symbolic bases of the Craft, which are part of the Royal Art, and which are strictly assimilable to a builder's way, are completed (in function of the existence of chivalric deposits within the Order) by the way of the Kshatriya [of the warrior], to use the terminology of Hinduism.

15

Hermeticism and Freemasonry, Chapter II.

16

Symbol, Rite, Initiation. The Masonic Cosmogony, by Seven Master Masons, ch. 33.

EBLIS - CAIN - HERMES - HIRAM

PHOENIX

The direct affiliation of Hermetic and Masonic initiates to their own Tradition is still little known to specialised researchers. Many of them are aware of their Cainite origin and the figure of Tubalcain, but they are unable to clearly establish this supracosmic and therefore non-human spiritual genealogy. Indeed, Cain is not the son of Adam and Eve like Abel, but of the messenger of the Light, Eblis, or Lucifer in the biblical tradition, who impregnated the former; thus Abel son of the human couple is the fruit of the earth, while Cain is a spiritual being born of the Light and therefore begotten by the celestial effluvium and without a known earthly father. As can be clearly seen, Abel's generation, which corresponds on the other hand to nomadism, time and pastoralism, is different from that of Cain, which is linked to space, agriculture, the use of the intellect in a practical way in the sense of the mastery of nature, especially with regard to the art and science of construction.¹ In this respect, Cain is a "counter-natural" son with respect to the "naturalness" proper to the species represented by Abel.

Eblis, the Spirit of Light, is thus the ancestor of a great dynasty which, as we shall see, is reproduced parallel to the genealogies of ordinary men. However, this Spirit of Light, or Lucifer, has always been hated by the latter, who, without being able to understand him, have always turned against him in a radical way, to such an extent that in the Koran he is equated with Satan himself. That is why Cain met the same fate and on his back was unloaded the fury not only of Adam but also of his mother Eve and his brother Abel, that is to say, of his entire merely human family, and it is for this reason that Cain had to murder in

defence of his true lineage to Abel, which in addition to indicating a change of cycle marked by the departure from paradise (where they harvested directly from the trees) and later by the abandonment of pastoral activity in the face of agricultural culture, also, in the polyvalence of the symbols, points to the destruction of the human brother that each one of us also carries within us. Continuing with Eblis or the Spirit or Angel of Light, it is said that he was reviled for not wanting to obey Adam, a simple human, and for that reason expelled from Paradise, becoming a spirit that gives rise to the Pole Star when the shining light that was on his forehead came off, and that this same condensation of Light, called the Pole Star, as has been said, is also the spiritual residence of the true King of the World, the Agartha; These latter symbols, or rather spiritual realities, are those which have guided the true initiates of this Manvantara and of the offspring of Eblis, or Iblis, and to which belong both Enoch, and Hermes, and Hiram Abif, builder of the Temple of Solomon. The Bible also tells us that the Queen of Sheba, Balkis, wanted to know Jerusalem; once there, the black queen rejected the wisest of kings and fell in love with the obscure Hiram, whose carnal ancestry was not even known. In the same vein, two points should be noted: firstly, that in Solomon's book "The Song of Songs" there is a direct mention of a black beloved who is rightly supposed to be Wisdom, and her relationship with the skin colour of Balkis, Queen of Sheba, and secondly, that from this latter people, first Jewish, then Christian, and later also with links to Islam, the sect of the Sabeans was born, whose inspiration was the prophet Idris, identified with the god Hermes. Likewise, in the 12th century in Islam itself, another important group of the faithful is said to have had Eblis as their patron and protective deity because he had not wanted to revere Adam, an exclusively human personage whom he felt to be inferior to his own category.² In this case it is the Adawiyah order from which the Yazidis or Yezidis of Kurdish Islam derive, all of whom are related to each other. It is thus a difference between the initiates, represented by Eblis or Iblis, the Spirit of Light, and the mere profane, the earthly children of Adam and Eve, and of two absolutely different races, one of them intellectual and the other merely profane. We wish to conclude these lines by signifying that this difference is imprinted from the beginning of this cycle in the very essence of the cosmos, and that their struggle cannot cease because of the envy born of the misunderstanding of mere mortals against the children of the Spirit, which will not end until the end of this great cycle, the former being manifold and related to religion, and the latter - the children of the Light - few in number and associated with metaphysics. That is, respectively with the horizontal and the vertical, or the quantitative and the qualitative.

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We would now like to refer to those seekers of Knowledge who began some time ago the path back to Unity, the supreme symbol of the Universal Self, which is reflected analogically in the unity of the individual being.

In this long pilgrimage of return, there are difficult moments, doubts and hesitations, lack of references and false illusions, feelings of emptiness and depression which often lead to despair. However, these situations are nothing but states of the soul of those who go deep into their inner selves and undergo the stripping necessary for the birth of the new man and his own construction, which is likened to the trials that the being must undergo in order to re-know himself in his own nature.

All this is normal, as we said, for those men and women who, by means of a radical process, try to free themselves from their programming and the conditioning that has imprisoned them to the point of asphyxiation in the old man, who nevertheless struggles strenuously with the advantage given to him by the official certification granted to him by the social environment and the uses and customs that have been implanted in his psychology, supported by the difficulty of a ritual work of this nature, which does not have the shelter and protection of anything known or what we are simply accustomed to, but on the contrary, tries to break with it.

From what we have said so far, it is seen that those called to knowledge need to develop a ritual work in which study and meditation must be emphasised and their psychology purged in order to be truly chosen, that is, to transcend the terms of their intellectual-spiritual limitations, to gain access to a new race: that of the Cainites, to the detriment of the bondage, multiple egos, and ignorance of the "innocent" and correct Abel, subject to the earth and the merely human, and with no possibility of access to other higher states of the Universal Being. That is to say, that what is only virtual must be realised through concentrated work, subject to order and the conception of a new vision, which appears and becomes clearer and clearer as one treads the Symbolic Way.

In fact, the first step on the path to being is already a degree that differentiates the strenuous postulant from the simple layman. But there is also a danger in assuming that this first level, which corresponds to the psyche, can give all that is truly aspired to on this path, which has nothing to do with a little power or the pride of the one who needs to be more than a simple mortal without initiatory pretensions - for many different reasons - and who is very often enormously superior in different ways to the character.

-often internal- to which we are referring. Thus it can be seen how many risks are involved for those who are interested in the subject of Sacred Science, which can be mistaken for both fraud and fanaticism in a perverse way. Thus, this process is not without its pitfalls, which in some cases can become permanently fixed.

We wish to make it clear that in many of these cases the origin must be sought in the pride and arrogance of the future neophytes, originating in the limitations of their intelligence with respect to the supremacy of the force of the passions that agitate them and in not submitting to the will of the celestial energies that are disproportionately challenged by relying on their own forces, which, being such, are erroneously considered as superior to any that could be opposed to them; The same is true with regard to the adherence to certain theories, personalities or "schools" with which these subjects identify themselves, in most cases without realising the deception of which they are consciously or voluntarily the victims.³

Although these cases, though not exceptional, are not the ones we wish to treat now, but those in which these first states of the intermediate world have already been overcome, we have wished to point them out so that they may not be confused with other planes of a much higher level, even of a different nature, and which are also part of the discovery of one's own identity, that is, our correspondence with the Universal Being.

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* *

The sentence "Know thyself" at the entrance of the Platonic Academy is well known, which is the true programme and at the same time the end of philosophy. For given the analogy, i.e. the correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm, it includes the essential Knowledge of the Universe.

The identity of the individual being is thus from the beginning the aim of philosophy and through it the understanding of the machine of the world. the discernment of the true nature of the human being is the first objective of philosophical knowledge, which gives rise to a branch of philosophy itself, Ontology, which deals specifically with the human being as with the Universal Being, i.e. with the Cosmos, thus preparing the field of Metaphysics, which, as its name indicates, is situated beyond mere human knowledge, and of which it could be said to be interested in the supra-cosmic and supra-individual.

As for the Bible and the three religions that derive from its texts, Ego sum qui sum obviously refers to the identity of the Universal Being, which is reflected in the individual being.

But not for all peoples and religions this is so marked and some, such as Hinduism, Buddhism or Taoism, do not place their emphasis on the human being as such, a valuation proper to the West and its culture, and much less on his personality as Psychology has done since recent times, although for all these conceptions, both Eastern and Western, man plays a central role in creation.

Identity is, in short, the central problem of our civilisation, and a real necessity in the sphere of our perspectives, whatever they may be, for it constitutes the nucleus through which every possibility is valid and every perspective intelligible. And the search for the self thus becomes, for today's man, the driving force behind his legitimate concerns and the core of the construction of his ideology.

The initiatory work, to which we have previously referred, acquires similar characteristics in the West, and it is from the knowledge of the individual being, and its effective realisation, that it becomes possible to know the Universal Being - since one cannot resign oneself to what one does not possess - and following on from this, to open oneself to the Knowledge of Non-Being, of that which is Not, which constitutes the field of what has come to be called Negative Theology.

But what is this being, and how can it be known, or at least how can it be accessed? These questions, whether explicitly formulated or not, make up the baggage of contemporary man, at least that of the minority of those who may have concerns of this kind and who differ from the immense majority immersed in sleep and the customary. The three great questions of philosophy: Where do I come from? Who am I? Where am I going? do not cease to refer expressly to it, the central proposition being the one that generates the other two placed symmetrically at its ends.

However, it can be observed at first glance that who I am is made from a subject who ignores the answer and places it as outside himself, which supposes a purpose of search and a longing for integration with something that is unknown and that would come to answer and therefore complete the preposition that underlies the question.

But this last attitude, natural if you will, and typical of those who begin the adventure of Knowledge and the return to the abode of themselves from which they have departed, a place from which they are exiled by a sort of solidification of their possibilities, runs the risk of becoming an objective to be achieved that is always outside of the human being himself, who, however, is the fundamental protagonist of this adventure and of the long and arduous labours that punctuate it, and which always move away as we approach its realisation. However, he or she is the main protagonist of this feat and of the long and arduous labours that punctuate it, and which always recede as we approach realisation, like the old example of the donkey that is given a carrot tied to a stick in front of him or her.

That is why at a certain point on this long path, which includes the loss in the labyrinth, the crossing of rivers, the struggle against the titans of passions, etc. etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., in short, the initiatory trials, it is good to return to the initial questions which are already different with respect to the various stages travelled, as has happened to us in others before, and with the wealth all that has been learned and the experience gained in the battle to obtain the Graal of consciousness, to ask oneself once again about the identity always in flight, since ignorance has almost become our habitual state and certain illusions and passions have only had to disappear due to the very circumstances of our inner journey. To stop then with confidence and awareness along the way - like the sun at the solstices - and to realise that identity is already set and that being is, no more and no less, all that is, and that is you; it's as simple as that.

Thus the being that has been changing along the way has become less and less rigid and less and less real with which to identify ourselves, less and less something with which such identification is possible. Being thus with respect to the concrete, subject to weight and measure, and to anything indefinite, having been transformed into something incapable of being classified, or even apprehended, and yet which is even closer than our own heart and which is more and more like that which it is not, than any other phenomenon, thing, or being of which it could be said to be something.

And so the initiate, the authentic Hermetic or Masonic master will have attained in this instance an intellectual degree befitting a true Cainite.⁴

NOTES

¹
In connection with the predominance of Cain over Abel of which we are speaking, there is a reversal in the meaning of Abel's "innocence". See in this connection "Cain and Abel", chapter XXI of René Guénon's *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, where among other things the author says that the story of Cain and Abel would no doubt have different characteristics and be susceptible of different interpretation from the point of view of the sedentary peoples, that is, of the creators of research and the corresponding space arts and sciences, that is, of the culture leading to the great civilisations.

Even considering the highest level of Adam, i.e. the Universal Adam (Adam Kadmon), or the Cosmos as Adam, Eblis feels superior to him because of his supra-cosmic, i.e. non-human, origin.

3

The examples of Lot's wife (Genesis 19, 26) and Orpheus on his return from hell when he turned to look at his deceased wife, Eurydice, which in both cases had been forbidden to them, are well illustrative in this respect.

4

"In the terms of traditional philosophy, 'God' is properly called 'nothing', and God does not know what he is, because he is no 'what'". A. K. Coomaraswamy: "Gradation and Evolution II" (in: What is Civilization?).

THE TEMPLE OF SALOMON. Isaac Newton. Introd. by J. M. Sánchez Ron. Translation and philological study by C. Morano. Debate/CSIC, Madrid 1996. CV+140 pgs.

In his foreword, J. M. S. R., with great appropriateness, points out that the economist Lord Keynes called Newton the last of the magicians. Indeed, the illustrious sage who enunciated the very famous law of universal gravity was an esotericist who saw in nature the Temple of the Great Architect of the Universe and therefore the scientist as a priest who could intervene in the processes of the world and lead to Knowledge and Origin thanks to the clues that the Creator had manifested and at the same time veiled in his cryptogrammatic discourse. Hencein his investigations Newton touched on biblical themes, for he considered the Book a compendium of revealed wisdom, despite the corruptions that its text had suffered, many of them perpetrated by the Roman religious hierarchy; the same applies to his alchemical investigations, to which he devoted great study and effort. In this, Newton did not particularly stand out from the other scholars of his time, since it is known that the generation of scientists who founded modern science (Locke, Kepler, F. Bacon, Robert Boyle, etc. etc.) did research in the same direction and perhaps gave more importance to biblical-theological studies, and even to Sacred History, as is the case, than to exclusively scientific or mechanical subjects (physics, chemistry, mathematics, optics, etc.), although, strictly speaking, Newton did not devote himself to the study of alchemy.), although in truth, these subjects were never separated, for they were treated without any difference between the sacred and the profane, which is easily verified when one compares the contents of Newton's own library (John Harrison, The Library of Isaac Newton, Cambridge Univ. Press 1978) or of some other library with which he worked (Isaac Barrow's private library, the Cambridge public libraries).

"Why do I call him a magician," Keynes asked, "because he looked upon the Universe and all that is contained in it as an enigma, as a secret which could be read by applying pure thought to certain evidence, to certain mystical clues which God had scattered over the world to enable a kind of philosophical treasure hunt for the esoteric brotherhood" (pgs. XI and XII intr.). (pgs. XI and XII, intr.)

In this sense the English scholar paid special attention to the biblical histories, as we have already pointed out, to which he referred several times and which he judged to be the most ancient with respect to the Greek - and even to the Chaldean - with undoubted erudition and a wealth of information of all kinds, taken from the most conspicuous studies of his place and time. It should be made clear that he did not use only the Biblical History (including the Apocalypse) as the sole source of his studies.

The position of the stars in the constellations of the zodiac given in descriptions of the Trojan War, and of the mission of Jason and the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece (which he placed in 937 BC), for example, set a pattern in space and time, thus anticipating both the archaeologists who subsequently discovered ancient cities of which there were "mythical" descriptions, and the modern science of Archaeology, and who considered that the position of the stars in the constellations of the zodiac given in descriptions of the Trojan War, and of the mission of Jason and the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece (which he placed in 937 BC.), for example, set a pattern in space and time, thus anticipating both the archaeologists who later discovered ancient cities of which there were "mythical" descriptions, and the modern science of archaeoastronomy, which dates sites - even large complexes - in relation to the study of the sky at the time they were built. In a manuscript of his entitled *The original of religions* we read (already quoted in our article, p. 38): "So it was the purpose of the first institution of true religion in Egypt to propose to mankind, by the structure of the ancient temples, the study of the structure of the world as the true Temple of the great God whom they worshipped".

And this is the purpose of Newton's research centred on the Temple of Solomon, which is revealed in this surprising and fascinating work, edited with all timeliness and comforting erudition by Ciriaca Morano and which we recommend to our readers. F. G.

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